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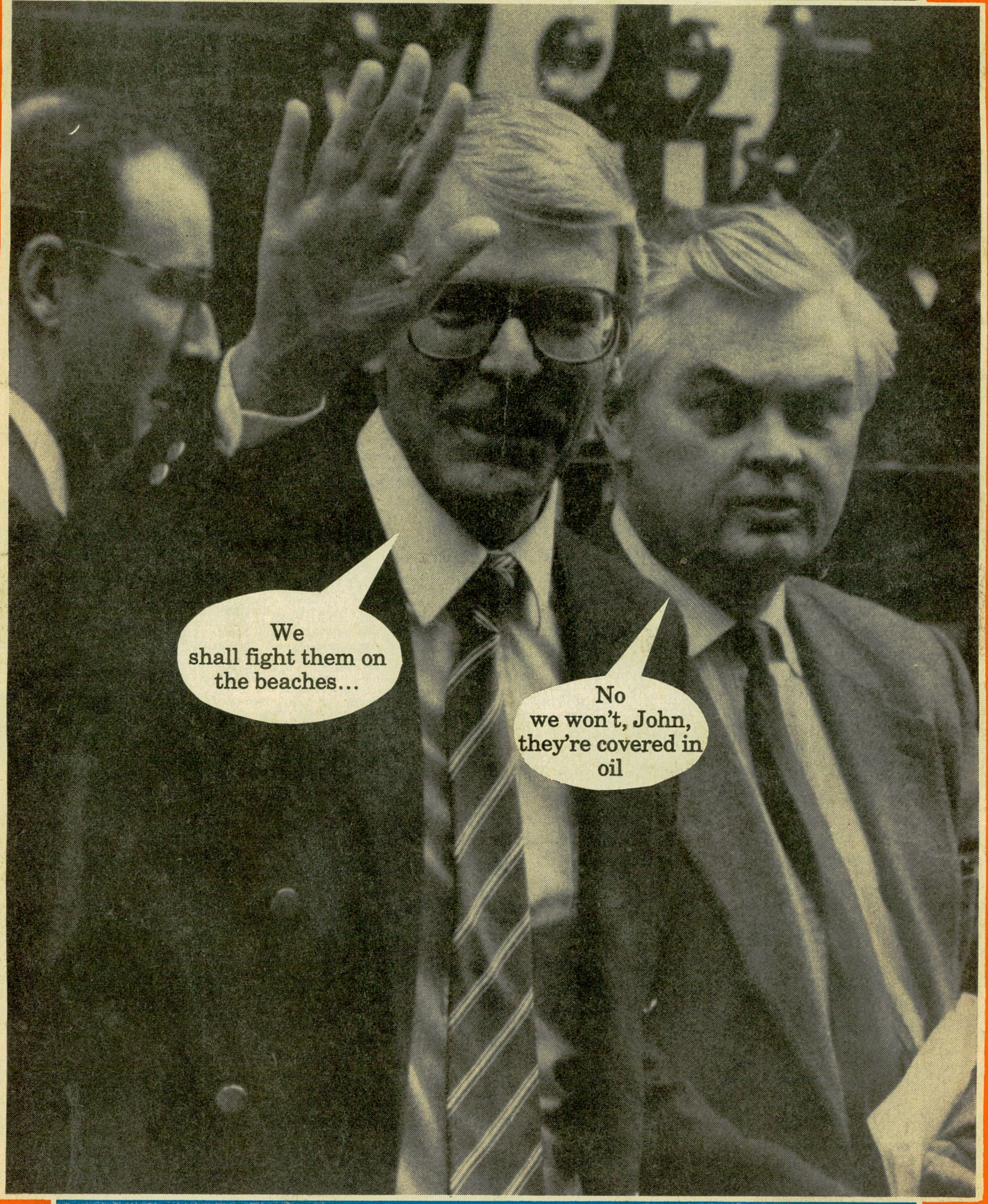

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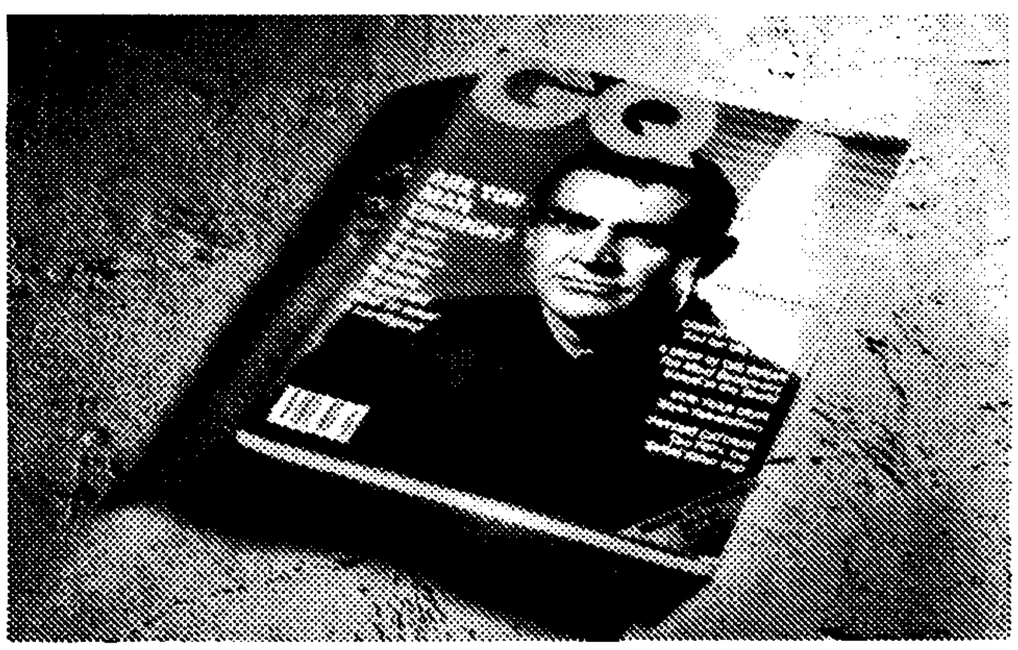

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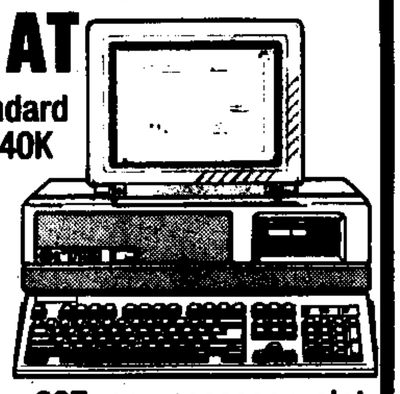

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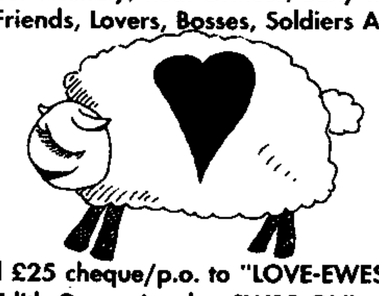

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IN A RECENT Decanter Magazine tasting of *widely-available* malt whiskies in competition with well-known VSOP cognacs, we are delighted to report that The Macallan 18 year old Single Highland Malt Whisky emerged from the fray as 'favourite after dinner drink'.

'. . . Good round fullness of palate. Excellent malt, lots of character, flavour and length of taste . . .' were typical of the malt and brandy buffs' accolades.

If the experts take such pleasure in our 18 year old's after-dinner company, wouldn't it be churlish to withhold it from your own nights?

The Macallan. The Malt.

Gnome

THANK GOODNESS the BBC has finally come to its senses and cancelled this week's episode of *Panorama*.

The programme was going to allege that weapons made in Britain would be used by the Iraqis against our soldiers. What a disgrace! Is this the sort of broadcast that is supposed to boost morale? Is this what the BBC considers to be its part in the war effort? Or are we once again seeing the not-very-British Broadcasting Company giving comfort to the enemy?

The cancellation of the programme is a return to what most of us would consider the BBC's patriotic duty.

As a typical manufacturer of engineering equipment in the North of England, may I add that I have seen nothing here at Gnome Universal Nuclear Supplies but loyal support for our troops as we do our bit for Britain rushing through vital export orders to the Middle East.

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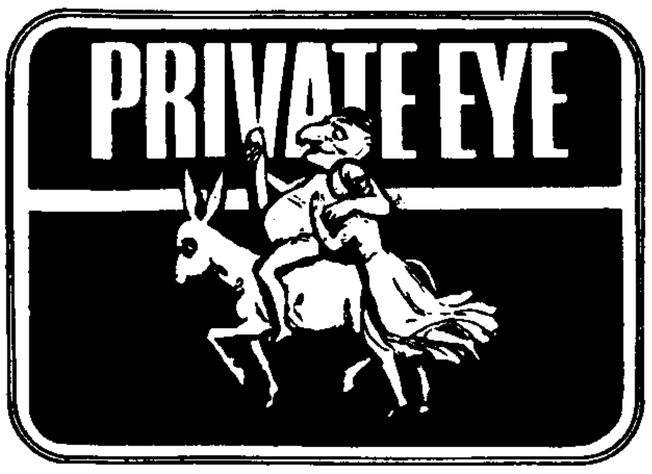


COLOUR SECTION

WHEN Douglas Hurd (*Guardian*, 24 January) did his best to pretend that Saddam Hussein had always been an enemy of the government in which Hurd has served for nearly 10 years, he made a very poor shot at it.

The plain fact is that during the Iran-Iraq war, and especially when it finished in 1988, the British Government joined the other western governments in helping in every way they knew to sustain Saddam's army and to reinforce it with the latest technology.

A technical arms embargo was maintained to placate opposition parties and investigative journalists. But the embargo was consistently ignored — and it was ignored because the Government gave nods and winks to the British arms industry to by-pass it and to get the arms moving.

For an account of how the economic ministries of western governments managed to break their own arms embargoes, it is hard to better an article in the American magazine *Moment*, published in December 1989.

Headed *We are the people who let it happen*, it was signed by Stephen D Bryen. Throughout the years of Ronald Reagan's presidency, he was deputy under-secretary of defence in charge of trade security. In his article Mr Bryen asked: Why has our government let private industry supply Iraq with the arms for chemical and biological warfare?

In 1986, he reveals, a US computer company (not named, unfortunately) applied for an export licence for a special type of analogue computer used for missile testing which had been ordered for the Sa'ad 16 complex in Iraq. The computer would be used for building both missiles and launchers, both of which were capable of long-range delivery of chemical and biological warfare agents.

Bryen objected strongly that this sort of thing not only broke the arms embargo but would put Saddam Hussein in an extremely powerful position in the Middle East. He confirmed to the US Commerce Department that the Sa'ad 16 complex was a missile site and that the computer equipment would have no other use but for weapons technology. He was also able to refute the familiar argument which always came back from the Commerce Department — that if the Americans didn't sell the equipment someone else (probably the Germans or the Japanese) would. In this case, Bryen pointed out wryly, the Germans and Japanese didn't make this sort of equipment.

The State Department (the US Foreign Office) at once sided with the Commerce Department, arguing that Bryen and his supporters were restraining free trade. The argument raged for about a year. Bryen finally won when he gained the support of the National Security Council, but he wrote: "While we were trying to stop this one license, the Commerce Department was allowing exportation of other material important to the Iraqi Sa'ad complex — such as special microwave antennae."

He reckons that at least 40 licence orders were signed by the Commerce Department in this short time: most of them, he thinks, for equipment that was likely to be used by the Iraqis in chemical and biological warfare. (The Commerce Department, incidentally, reacted to his complaints about the missile computer by making sure he didn't see any other requests for export of arms to the Middle East.) Even in Bryen's own department, he says, "our Iraq desk officers were inclined to let the exports go ahead because they were trying to improve relations with Iraq..." The same was true of desk officers in the State Department.

Bryen blamed the German government in particular for supplying not only Iraq but also Syria and Libya with sophisticated equipment for launching chemical weapons over a long range. He called for more power for the Defence Department to overrule not only Commerce but also the State Department itself.

In Britain exactly the same process went on, though there was no one in the Ministry of Defence half as keen on stopping it as was Mr Bryen. In general, the Department of Trade and Industry handed out licences like confetti for what it obviously took to be arms — Supergun, and its subsidiaries, is the most obvious example.

Someone had to arm Iraq, the message came down. Saddam was a faithful ally and he had to be sustained. If British firms didn't do it others — the French and the Italians — would. Quickly the DTI (guided by the most energetic pre-invasion Tory supporter of Saddam, Alan Clarke) helped the allies to refurbish his army from top to bottom.

The hypocrisy of men like Hurd and Clarke is extraordinary. They helped build up the army of Saddam: now they urge others to pit their strengths against the very guns and equipment which the free and democratic west provided for the dictator in the first place.

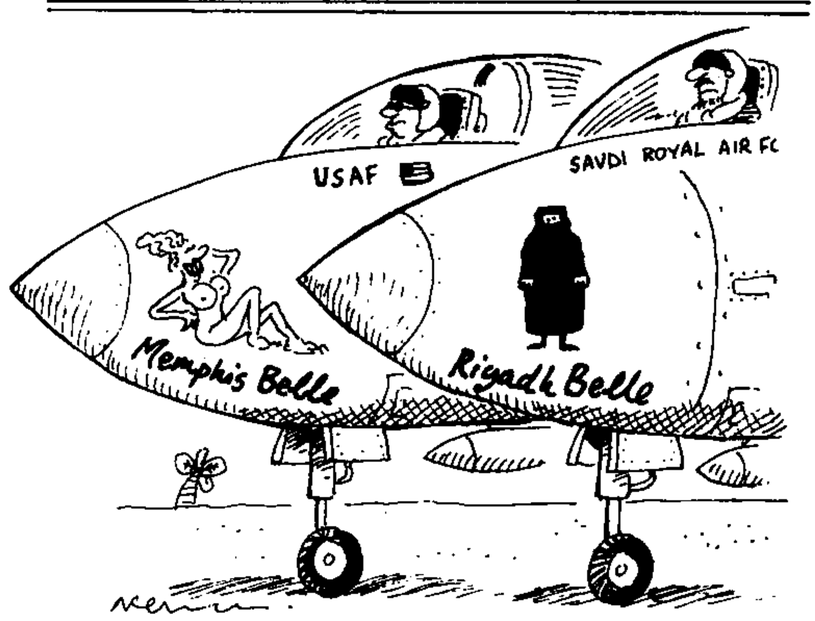
OLD PRESS releases issued by the Northern Ireland Office make shameful but fascinating reading these days. For just a couple of years ago the NIO was boasting loudly about the success of Ulster firms in supplying building services to Baghdad — all with the help of the British taxpayer.

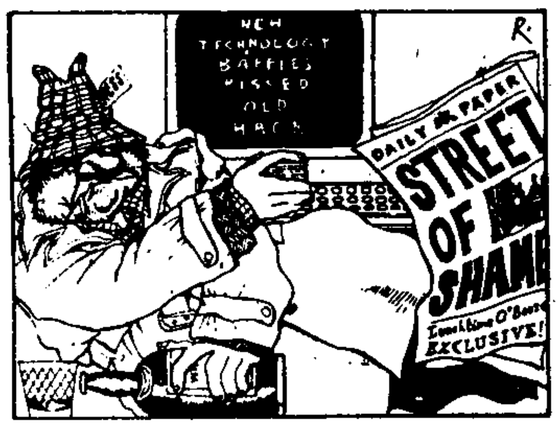
With "support" — ie hard cash — from the province's Industrial Development Board, Mivan Overseas Ltd was acclaimed for its work throughout Iraq, especially for its role in the construction of Saddam Hussein's administrative palace — currently the subject of much world attention. Complete with its "60mm-thick bullet resistant glass", the palace also "required specialist doors and windows, mechanical and electrical services" — all of which were subsidised by the UK taxpayer.

According to the Government "the company's professional approach and quality of service" helped land "the most prestigious contract" in the Middle East, although presumably there's now some anxiety about the standard of the work that was done.

Apparently "the conflict with Iran actually helped to create some of the work. The Iranians in their war effort had attacked a number of power stations and this prompted the Iraqis to provide strategic factories with their own source of power — diesel generating stations." Iraq's desire not to be caught out again was "supported under the 40/30 marketing scheme and through the work of the British Overseas Trade Board" — cheery reading indeed for our boys in the RAF.

But just who was running the NIO during these glorious days of rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure? Why, it was none other than... Tom King, Minister of Defence.





HACKS AT the *News of the Screws* were so excited about the outbreak of the Gulf War that they invested in a huge map of the region. But when the Iraqi scuds began to rain down on Israel they looked at the map only to find that Israel was not on it.

A brief perusal of the bottom of the map revealed that it had been printed in Beirut by Arabs who do not acknowledge Israel's existence. The hacks have had to trace in the outline of Israel's borders by hand.

MAX "Hitler" Hastings is proving insufferable while the Gulf War rages and he is away from the front.

Much to his chagrin, a trip to the region with *Times* and *Sunset Times* editors Simon Jenkins and Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill had to be cancelled, since when "he's like a dog with a sore cock," says one *Torygraph* hack. "He's been shouting at everyone and jabbing his finger everywhere."

On the night war broke out, the news editor decided to ring Hastings, who had been enjoying his last day's shooting in the country, on his mobile phone. An irate Hastings picked up the phone and said: "I thought I told you never to ring me on this number" and slammed down the phone. The news editor rang back, shouted "War has started" — and slammed down the phone himself.

WHEN THE rumour first surfaced that Saddam Hussein's dear lady wife had fled to Mauritania, no one was more excited than the *Daily Mirror*'s assistant editor, Tom Hendry.

Hendry has a commendable enthusiasm for covering the news, but cannot always work out where it's happening. During the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, while he was belatedly despatching *Mirror* hack Ted Oliver to China, Oliver told him that he could get to Peking "within 24 hours". "Great, Ted," Hendry replied impatiently, "but how long will it take you to get from Peking to Beijing?"

News of Hendry's geographical dyslexia has obviously reached his latest boss, ex-Maoist Roy Greenslade. When Hendry bounded into the editor's office with news of Mrs Saddam's flight, a straight-faced Greenslade gently corrected him. "It's not *Mauritania*, Tom," he explained. "It's Ruritania."

Hendry rushed out to pass the news to the paper's deputy foreign editor, Mark Dowdney. "Greenslade's told me where Saddam's wife is," he revealed breathlessly. "Ruritania. It's in Africa."

"No," Dowdney replied. "Ruritania's in Europe. I think it's near Hungary."

Well wherever it is, we must go there at once."

Dowdney agreed. It was only after the two men spent several minutes pouring over a map of Europe, baffled by their inability to spot the elusive country which was sheltering Iraq's first lady, that a lowly *Mirror* hack broke the sad news — that Ruritania did not exist outside the imagination of Anthony Hope, who invented the country many years ago for his novel *The Prisoner of Zenda*.

TROUBLE at t' Murdoch mill, where cash is now tighter than a duck's bottom.

At the *Sunday Times*, one hack who wanted his usual five A3 page proofs was told by a clerical worker that there was no photocopier paper because the bill had not been paid.

And on Wednesday 23 January, the motorcycle couriers at Wapping went on a one-day strike because they had not been paid for three months. The Wapping cleaners have not been paid either and so have cancelled their contract, leaving the offices of the *Sunday Times*, *Times* and *Sun* piled with rubbish, empty coffee cups and old newspapers, etc.

A graduate trainee (cost: £10,000) has been hired to do the "Prufrock" City diary on the *Sunday Times* as a replacement for the previous piss-poor columnist (cost £30,000).

Also on 23 January, bailiffs were sent by Haselblad to remove a £14 million press from the *Sun*. Meanwhile the *Sun*'s shrewd commercial department bought 50,000 mutant turtles wall-charts to supply to readers as part of a special offer and still have 47,000 unsold.

IVAN FALLON, the silver-haired deputy editor of *The Sunset Times*, has not stopped performing his usual role as his paper's chief sycophant to the rich and famous.

When a *Sunday Times* hack wrote a piece reviewing the names on Mrs Thatcher's resignation honours list, Fallon curry-combed the copy, removing all critical references to his chum Sir Jeffrey Sterling, chairman of P&O.

However, Fallon is no object of sycophancy himself. When he wandered into a photocopying room in his office and tried to pull rank over one of the lads from the mail-room, he was greeted with the word "Wanker!"

He asked the youth to repeat what he said, whereupon the youth did so. When he told the lad to report to him the following morning, he received the reply: "I'm on holiday tomorrow and you're still a wanker." No disciplinary action has been taken against the perceptive fellow.

THE *Observer* hack Sean French, recently invited to the leaving party for *Sunset Times* arts editor John Whitley, was taken aback by an unusual phone call from Penny Perrick, the *ST*'s former literary editor and now regular reviewer.

La Perrick confessed that it was the most embarrassing call she had ever been asked to make, but would French mind refusing the invitation when he received it?

Apparently, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill, the host of the party, still feels resentful towards Wapping refuseniks such as French.

THE *OBSERVER*'s declining standards slip still further. Several days before war broke out in the Gulf the paper, edited by LBC radio presenter Donald "Busy" Trelford, censored a picture of a peace demo.

Its 13 January edition carried a large photograph of the thousands who, under their Spartish banners, had clogged the streets of the capital to protest against the war. Strangely, a number of the placards looked incomplete. Above a "No War US-Britain Out of the Gulf" homily, for example, a thick black line was clearly obliterating the name of the message's sponsor. Even more bizarrely, several similar banners had the same message but topped with the unmistakable logo of the Socialist Workers' Party. What was going on?

The *Observer* provided an answer the following week. Following a tirade of angry callers, the paper carried a "correction" which claimed that "some banners of the Socialist Workers' Party were removed in the photographic process. We regret this error."

It is a pretty weird photographic process that alters the wording of some banners and leaves the rest intact. So what really happened? Could, God forbid, some poor hack on the art desk have been told to doctor the photo with a black felt tip pen before the pages went off to the printer? The treatment meted out to one of the banners gave the game away. Half the SWP logo has been obliterated and below it — plainly written in by hand — are the last four letters of the instruction "remove".

PATSY CHAPMAN, editorette of the *News of the Screws*, has landed herself a job on the new Press Complaints Commission where she can be expected to take a principled stand on the ethical behaviour of fellow hacks and hackettes.

Luckily she knows just what she is up against judging by her own behaviour during the Wapping print dispute of 1986.

Then La Chapman, a former *Daily Mirror* staffer, joined Kelvin McKenzie at the *Sun* and regularly telephoned former colleagues on the *Daily Mirror*'s "stone" before pages of the Maxwell rag went to press.

So as not to rouse suspicion, Chapman pretended to be Ms Kim Fensom, a *Mirror* sub-editor, but was finally caught out one night when she rang to check "a minor point" on the splash headline asking what it

actually said.

Brian Bass, a senior *Mirror* hack, realised that Ms Fensom was off sick and recognised Ms Chapman's voice. The subsequent ethical rumpus between the *Sun* and *Mirror* NUJ chapels ended in stalemate.

MORE AND more stories emerge about the world's greatest living journalist, glamorous *Mail on Sunday* hackette Barbara Jones, and her tangled relationship with the Ripper.

In late 1988 the *Sunday People* ran a story relating to two tape-recordings of Peter Sutcliffe in Broadmoor. The tapes had been smuggled out of Broadmoor and into the hands of one John Masterson. Masterson had not, however, attempted to sell the tapes to the *Sunday People*: he had tried to sell them to the *News of the World* (Investigations Editor: Eddie Jones) and to the *Mail on Sunday* (Ripper Expert: Barbara Jones).

Masterson considered that he had been robbed and was so annoyed that he started to make threatening phone calls to Eddie Jones, who brought in his lawyer. Masterson then called in Lord Kilbracken (a contact with a mutual interest in Kurdish affairs) who contacted the National Union of Journalists. It provided solicitors Stephens Innocent to sort out Eddie Jones — and the legal fight began.

A settlement was eventually reached on the grounds that £10,000 had indeed been paid by the *People* to Eddie Jones for material that did not belong to him. A sum of £10,000 therefore was paid to Masterson.

Who delivered this money in cash? And to whom did Stephens Innocent send a letter confirming the deal and the return of the tapes? Why none other than the other Jones — Barbara — who was named as a party in the settlement of Masterson's claims.

Barbara meanwhile has finally found a publisher for her book on the Yorkshire Ripper: having been rejected by Weidenfeld and Random, she has had to settle for a decidedly downmarket publishing house called Headline Books.

The tome is due out in October and promises to be one of the most heavily lawyered books ever written. No doubt it will be serialised in the *Mail on Sunday*, which has already paid Barbara £25,000 for those rights — money that Barbara passed on to Sonia Sutcliffe.

THE IMMINENT launch of *Esquire* in Britain has seen its owners, National Magazine Company, indulging in some desperate puffing of the new title and its unknown editorial team in some of its other publications.

Esquire editor-in-chief Lee Eisenberg has given us the benefit of his views on sexual mores in *Cosmopolitan*, while in *Good Housekeeping* we have been treated to an "At Home" feature about... Lee Eisenberg. *Harpers & Queen* also invited a Lee Eisenberg to pronounce about the current recession and he came up with these exciting comments: "Approaching '90 I *thought* a recession was likely. Now I know we're in for a rough patch. With luck I'll stay even — despite the adverse exchange rates I have to pay as an American living abroad."

Even *Esquire's* editor Alex Finer (who used to commission the cookery features for the *Weekend Torygraph Magazine*), has had his kitchen written about in Nat Mag's *Country Living*.

Where will it all end?

David Hart

IN *Eye* 753 for 26 October 1990, we published an item about *World in Action* and Mr David Hart. Our article has been interpreted as implying that Mr Hart had, through his solicitors, instructed a private investigator to commit a series of burglaries, including breaking into the offices of *World in Action* in Manchester.
We acknowledge that there is no truth whatsoever in these allegations and apologise unreservedly to Mr Hart for the distress and embarrassment which our publication caused him.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

AMONG THE usual gaggle of retired field marshals and rear admirals trotted out by BBC television, viewers have been surprised to see a pimply youth on their screens drawing what appear to be rather self-evident conclusions about the Gulf War.

The lad is one Francis Tusa, which has led his more mean-spirited and vindictive colleagues to speculate that he may in some way be the son of John Tusa, head of the BBC's External Services. Which he is.

IN THE November edition of *Mirabella*, the magazine's health and beauty editor Leslie Kenton sang the praises of nutritionist Martin Felt, who is also a Kabbalistic rabbi.
"One can count on the fingers of one hand the genuinely unique visions which have made a significant contribution to health and healing in the last century..." she gushed, "Such a unique vision is the Felt System of Unified Nutrition... In 20 years of exploring nutritional systems I have never come across anything so powerful, finely tuned and effective..."
Ms Kenton informed her readers that Rabbi Felt could be consulted through John Bell & Croyden of Wigmore Street, London. What she forgot to say was that she has been living with Felt ever since the rabbi left his wife and children.

WINSTON Churchill's granddaughter, freelance hackette Emma Soames, has been less than kind to her old boss at Condé Nast, Nicholas Coleridge, in a review of his recently published collection of piss-poor short stories.

"His perception of human nature appears to be limited to how it can be exploited and he lacks the ability to draw an accurate thumbnail sketch... When he does escape from the jolly goings-on at country weddings and on villa holidays, his perception of human behaviour becomes even weaker... These characters clatter woodenly through the pages, often repeating the same phrases over and over as if this device renders them credible."

Although it says beneath the review that La Soames used to edit *Tatler*, it nowhere explains that it was Coleridge who sacked her from this post.

Eileen Pembridge

IN OUR issue dated the 4th January 1991 we carried a report on the libel action between Sonia Sutcliffe and the *News of the World*. It stated that Mrs Sutcliffe's solicitor, Mrs Eileen Pembridge, had left court in a hurry prior to the disclosure of certain interesting documents and, as it was later reported in court, that Mrs Pembridge had been taken ill.
Mrs Pembridge has informed us that the report may have been understood to mean that she left Court pretending to be ill in order to avoid having to disclose certain documents. While not accepting this interpretation, we are nevertheless happy to confirm that Mrs Pembridge left court following a genuine and sudden illness.

"Will you please stop interrupting, Coitus"

A FORGED letter purporting to carry the signature of loony right-winger Michael Forsyth is the latest embarrassment for the Scottish Tory Party.

The fake missive, printed in a Peebles newspaper, praised the aspiring Tory hopeful for Sir David Steel's Borders seat — one Lloyd "Dead" Beat — and its publication has sparked fresh witch-hunting among disunited Tories north of the border.

According to the letter "Dead" Beat, who comes from the party's Rottweiler tendency, is a "man of immense local experience as a merchant banker and insurance salesman" — qualities bound to endear him to local sheep farmers.

Forsyth is the former chairman of the Scottish Tories, leader of the party's loony wing and a hero figure to "Dead" Beat's Dundee faction, whose members have accused the left-wing Tory Reform Group of dirty tricks.

In turn, the TRG suspects that local Liberals are responsible, while "Dead" himself suspects the letter to be the work of Lord Wallpaper, current party chairman, whose disgust at the Borders nomination is an open secret.

Forsyth has meanwhile demanded an explanation from the editor of the paper that published "his" letter.

VIOLENCE, intimidation and deception have become an almost routine item on the agenda of recent Labour Party meetings in Birmingham.

The row over who should replace Denis Howell as MP for Small Heath (see *Eyes passim*) has outgrown the constituency and threatens to destroy much of the goodwill on which the West Midlands party structure depends.

Much of the blame must lie with the party's union barons who calmly assumed that the seat was theirs to do what they liked with. But their blatant manipulation of the union block vote produced such an outcry from local members that votes from a recent selection meeting will remain locked in a safe uncounted until the row is resolved.

Four candidates are seeking to replace Howell: Roger Godsiff, a London-based organiser with the GMB union, and three city councillors — Muhammad Afzal, Najma Hafeez and Stewart Stacey. Last week the party's national executive committee sent Eddie Haigh and Joyce Gould, two top officials, to Birmingham to find out what was going on. Tony Rust, a leading city solicitor and Labour Party member, put the case for the three councillors and their colleagues.

Haigh and Gould were accompanied by the party's regional "organiser" Fraser Kemp, whose handling of the affair which is proving so destructive is thought not to have escaped the attention of party bosses. The three whittled the mass of evidence, counter-evidence and simple abuse down to two issues.

The first was whether the electricians' union, the EEPTU, had falsely nominated delegates to the Small Heath selection committee. Four people told the inquiry that they had been nominated to the committee even though they were not union members. Strangely, all had been signed into constituency meetings that they could not remember attending.

The four had been nominated by the union's national political officer, John Speller, who is himself Labour candidate for Warley West where the sitting MP, Peter Archer, is due to retire. Speller's nomination in Warley West also owed a lot to careful organisation of the union block vote.

Speller had been asked to explain to the inquiry the nominations but strangely he did not turn up. Some said he got the date wrong. The inquiry is expected to draw its own conclusions.

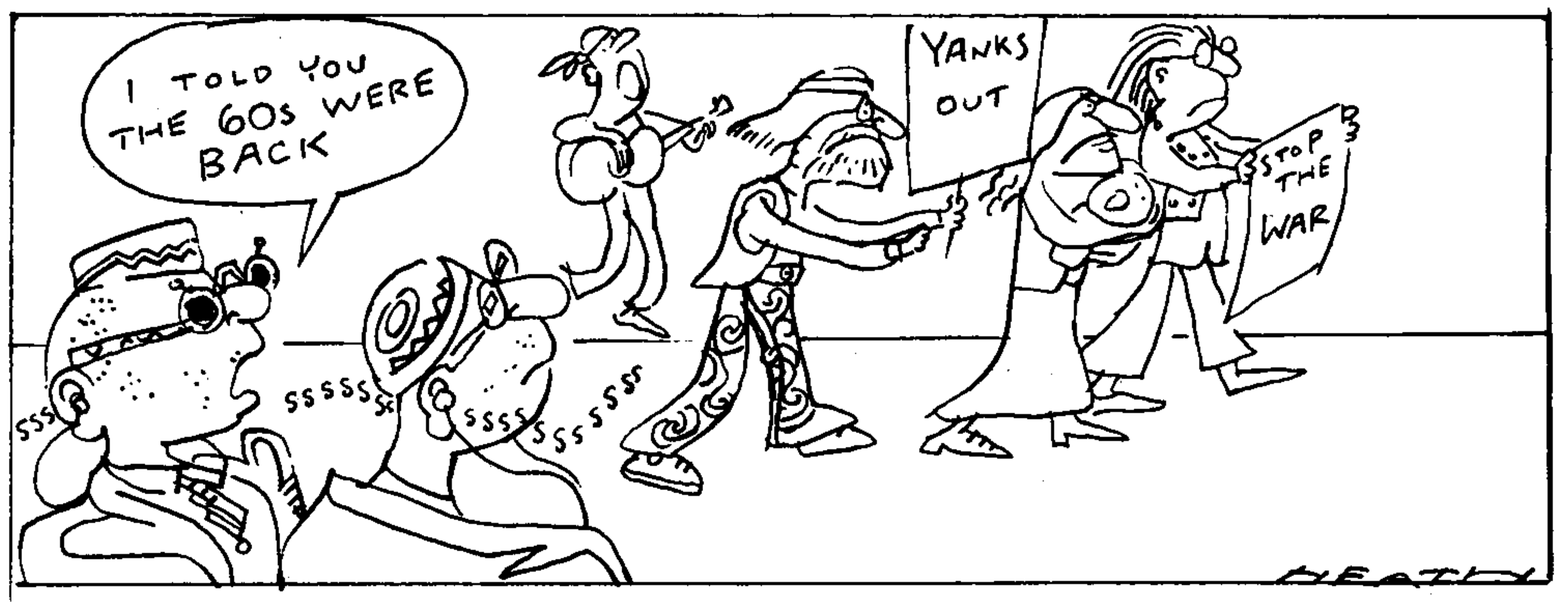
The second issue concerns the Birmingham south-east branch of the Co-operative Party. Adrian Bailey, *another* national organiser, had tried to change the way the branch chose its delegates to Small Heath. The result has been a high court action against the Co-op Party. Bailey was so convinced of his case that he refused to give evidence while his Co-op party colleagues were in the room.

Haigh's findings will be reported to Labour's NEC this week and party bosses hope it will mark an end to the bloodletting. But with one candidate, Muhammad Afzal, already having suffered two beatings, and a series of threats having been made to other party members in Small Heath, the wounds are unlikely to heal for many months — whatever Haigh decides.

'Backbiter'

NUMERO UNO

MICHAEL HEATH



Grovel

AS THE great day approaches when my friend Kingsley Amis's memoirs are to be published, there have been several last-minute revisions.

The deaths of Malcolm Muggeridge and Roald Dahl mean that defamatory stories about both of them have been hastily reinstated at proof stage, and another story that threatened to elicit a lawsuit has been subtly altered, though not in the service of truth.

The story originally featured the historian Robert Conquest and concerned his alleged Ugandan antics at a party, where he pleasured a lady upstairs, shinned down a drainpipe and went to the nearest shop for a packet of cigarettes, then returned to the party and proceeded to chat up the lady whose company he had so lately enjoyed as if they had only just met, whereupon she slapped his face. When Conquest was shown the story he thought it very funny but denied all knowledge of the incident and warned the Old Devil that he would have to consult Messrs. Sue Grabbit and Runne if it were to find its way into print.

Amis gave some thought to the matter, then decided that, since he could not for the life of him remember who the real subject of the story was, he would claim that it had been one of his dead friends. It appears in the final version as a story about Philip Toynbee.

● *DENIS THATCHER tells me there is one subject on which he doesn't see eye to eye with the Leaderene, and that's the BBC.*

Somewhat taken aback, I ask him to elaborate. "Well," he explains, "it's simple. Ten years of Tory government and the buggers are still around."

TO ST BRIDE'S for a memorial service for my old friend George G. Ale.

We hear Mr Paul "Loonybins" Johnson pay tribute to the way in which Ale "always spoke and wrote his mind regardless of the consequences".

My thoughts fly back to an occasion when the late pundit of the *Telegraph*, T.E. Utley, was giving a talk to a Tory seminar. When he invited questions from the floor, George stood up and said: "I've got a question, Mr Utley. Why are you such a c—?"

"William Jones, specialist topic 'The Western'"

Pseuds Corner

As a mathematician, I now completely reject the concept that the universe came into existence several billion years ago and believe it to stretch back infinitely into the past but that this can't be expressed in terms of time. I believe the creation of the universe is explained correctly as follows:

"The potentiality of the reality implies the reality of the potentiality."

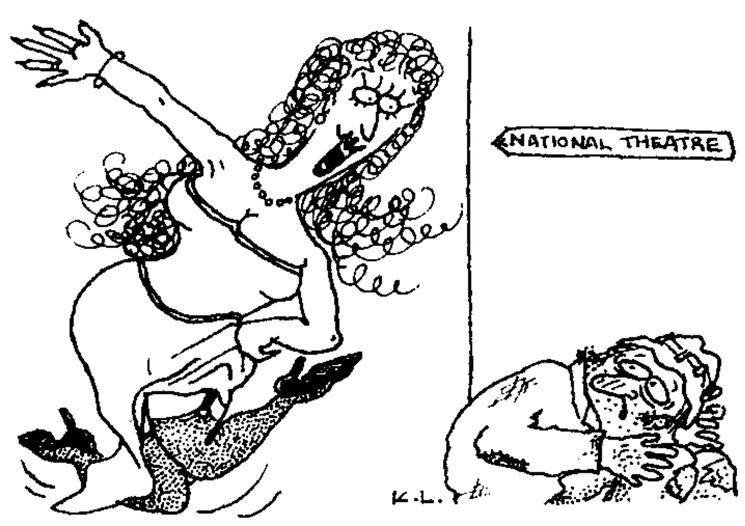
C. FINDEN
Astronomy Now

To move from the generative to the excretory, I consider 'shit' to have one of the most dignified, indeed poetic, etymologies of them all. The sensation of the splitting of the fundament under the stress of fecal discharge relates the word to the Indo-European root skheid — 'split, divide, separate' — and the Greek derivative 'schizophrenia'.

ANTHONY BURGESS
Observer

Hypertext is text that goes beyond text, challenging the traditional linear conventions of text. It is text constructed and deconstructed at the same time, text in a permanent flux of meaning and content. It is text that exists in time rather than space, text which has no specific entry point, where the reader can find a discrete path rather than follow the established route. It is text in which there are many levels of embedded knowledge and meaning, enabling the reader to move from level to level, like a fish in water.

CHRIS BARLAS
The Stag



Outside the National Theatre I saw a beggar asking a young woman for money. Instead she treated him to a few bars of a song. "Move closer," she sang, with movements. "Move your body real closer." Then she went on her way. She didn't give him money, but she gave him something much more important — sharing, teaching him to laugh at the terribleness of it all. I wish I could do that.

TOM CRABTREE
Cosmopolitan

It [*Porgy and Bess*] is an extraordinary opera and very moving. It gives a better understanding of the problems of being black than almost anything else.

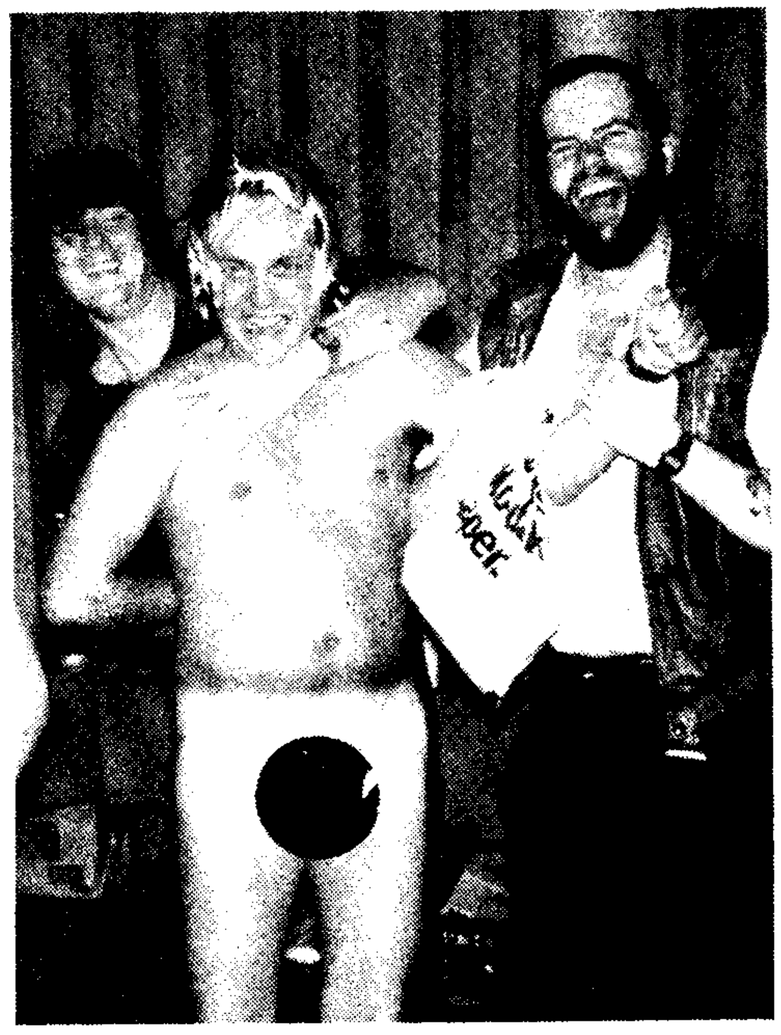
LORD GOODMAN
Desert Island Discs

She [Ruth Rendell] was, the cited puffs insist, "the Queen of Crime". Although this office harks back to the Magna Mater, *la* Christie (whose works I only ever enjoyed when translated into Spanish)...

FREDERIC RAPHAEL
The Spectator

CONTRIBUTORS: Moray Taylor, Duncan Neale, David Holbrook, T.P. White, J. Spencer, S.M. Buckley.

£10 paid for entries



MY PHOTOGRAPH shows Sun columnist Gary Bushell in an early incarnation. The Mensa member, social commentator and scourge of the gay movement is seen here attempting to assist a member of the heavy metal group Iron Maiden with his toilet. The picture has been censored for use in a family magazine, but unfortunately the black circle has slipped from its original position over Mr Bushell's face.

I CAN NOW reveal why Mrs Thatcher's erstwhile mouthpiece Sir Bernard Ingham failed to land the widely-tipped job of PR director of the Prudential.

Chairman Sir Brian "Lawrence of Arabia" Corby, who is also president of the CBI, raised three objections. Ingham was too high profile for the Pru; his proposed salary of £170,000 was excessive; and the personalities of Ingham and "Mick-the-Bruiser" Newmarch, the chief executive who was so keen to recruit him, were too similar.

Ingham was tempted by the money but was not willing to take on such a boring job for less. This is perhaps a shame, for as the Pru's PR man he would have had to defend many gaffes — like the disastrous foray into estate agency; backing the *Sunday Correspondent* and thus greatly damaging the *Independent* (another Pru investment); and wasting more money on investing in ill-chosen "high tech" companies. As is well known, defending gaffes is his forte.

I NOTICE that the *Daily Mail* ran an obituary of its former political editor, Walter Terry, without mentioning two salient points about him.

The first was that he had worked for the *Daily Express* and the *Sun* at later stages in his career, and the second was that he had fathered two of Marcia Falkender's love-children. No doubt the *Mail*'s editor, the highly moral Sir David English, thought that such information unworthy of his readers.

● *MY SPIES in New York tell me that my good friend Gerald Ronson has called a halt to construction of the 26-storey "Heron Tower" in Manhattan. The reason given to gullible New Yorkers is that the property market is too soft to build past the already completed foundations. I was happy to be able to reassure them that Gerald will not be without a roof over his head while the project is stalled.*

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

AS INTERNATIONAL tourists, thirsty for art, converge on the European City of Culture for 1991 (Dublin, in case you had forgotten), they will naturally make their way to the Guinness brewery. On the way, they may well notice, with surprise, a prominent symbol of what culture actually means to Charlie Haughey and the boys. For in Thomas Street, near the celebrated brewery, stands St Catherine's Church (see illustration), one of many great monuments of the real civilization that was Georgian Dublin.

Designed by John Smyth and built in 1769, this handsome stone Roman Doric building was depicted in one of Thomas Malton's famous aquatints. Today it still stands — just: its windows bricked up; its stonework blotched by water penetration; its facade enhanced by a large "For Sale" sign. Its present condition is a standing invitation to Dublin's flourishing army of arsonists and pyromaniacs.

Such is official culture — for St Catherine's in Thomas Street is actually owned by Dublin Corporation. The Church of Ireland closed it in 1966 and sold it for a nominal sum to the corporation on the understanding that it would be restored and converted for some appropriate cultural or community use. So, rather than do anything itself, the corporation leased it in 1970 to the Bell Tower Trust which, working entirely voluntarily, restored St Catherine's as a hall for concerts, plays and exhibitions — winning a Europa Nostra award for the achievement. All the corporation did was to make a few repairs to the facade and to destroy the churchyard to the rear by ripping out most of the gravestones — including one of 1613.

But the sad story of St Catherine's demonstrates the problems culture faces in the capital of the Irish Republic. The theatre-going middle classes have long been driven out of the city centre — and away from the magnificent Georgian houses they might be restoring — by pollution, noise and general urban decay — all things the corporation could actually do something about, if it chose. The church stands in the ancient Liberties area of Dublin, which now demonstrates all the usual symptoms of inner-city decline. St Thomas's ceased to flourish as a cultural institution, while vandals assisted the corporation's indifference by destroying the expensive internal lighting system.

St Catherine's now needs another restoration. In the great Year of Culture, you might think that it could serve as a Liberties Heritage Centre, or whatever. Indeed, this was suggested as appropriate for 1991, but naturally turned down. Could not a sponsor be found? Not far away is the famous brewery and, indeed, St Catherine's was once the Guinness family's parish church. But, believe it or not, post-Ernest Saunders the brewers plead poverty and, besides, the responsibility really lies with the building's legal owner. Yet all the corporation has done is withdraw the Bell Tower Trust's lease and put the building up for sale. It might have supported the South Inner City Community Development Association's doomed plan to restore the building with Euromoney, but Dublin only wants EEC financial help to drive motorways through the city centre.

Dublin Corporation's public relations man, Mr Noel Carroll, claims that the corporation has no money to repair the building, despite the profits made from selling development sites in the city. He has also stated that his employer's record with regard to St Catherine's is "exemplary", adding: "Who says the corporation has a responsibility to preserve churches?" Well, in any civilized society — even in communist, atheist ones — the authorities do recognise that responsibility.

Of course, man cannot live by architecture alone, but a city's monuments are its past, present and future: visible symbols of past cultural aspirations which can still inspire and flourish, giving a sense of identity and continuity. And, of all urban monuments, the most telling, most poignant and accessible, the most intimate and familiar, are the places of worship: the churches. They belong to the people, to the nation — and can still perform a valuable cultural purpose.

Perhaps I must not be too negative. Last year, the people of the Irish Republic elected as president Mrs Mary Robinson who, unlike most Irish politicians, does not seem primarily to represent the interests of builders, developers and car salesmen. Indeed, she must be the only politician, anywhere, ever to have been photographed reading a book on architectural history (in the *Daily Telegraph*: turning the pages of the life of James Gandon, architect of the Four Courts and the Custom House — two of Dublin's greatest monuments).

Can she, I wonder, suggest to Dublin Corporation that, if the Year of Culture is not to be a complete farce, it might be a good idea to be seen to care for the built culture of a once-great city?

'Piloti'

GULF NEWS

FROM THE people who bombed West Beirut to rubble in 1982 comes a preemptive strike on the US taxpayer: in return for *not* retaliating — yet — for Iraq's Scud missile attacks, Israeli premier Yitzhak Shamir wants $13 billion — to be going on with.

This is likely to provoke renewed demands for parity from Syrian leader and former terrorist Hafez Assad (Butcher of Homs, retd, circa 2 August 1990), who is facing severe difficulties at home. Assad may be satisfied with a promise of the return of the Golan Heights, but the Israelis probably think that they have been promised that they can keep *all* the occupied territories.

The Egyptians are expecting another $10 billion from a grateful West, in addition to the $14 billion in debt write-offs and grants (see *Eyes passim*). The Turks meanwhile are expecting $3.6 billion and possibly the oil fields in the north of Iraq.

Of course the Saudis, Kuwaitis and other Gulf states are expected to foot the bill for most of this, but none of them will pay anything to Jordan. Having — albeit belatedly — found democracy, Jordan is obeying the UN embargo (even though it is crippling her economy) and paying for hundreds of thousands of refugees. In return the country has been *loaned* $2 billion by the Japanese.

And while everyone bankrolls everyone else, what is Britain getting out of it? Not a lot, it seems. Government officials hoping to win reconstruction contracts in Kuwait are having little success. It seems they have already been sewn up by the Americans.

ISRAEL has refused to allow the charity Oxfam to ship in supplies of the anti-nerve gas agent atrophine into the West Bank where, outside the Israeli settlements, there is no network of air raid sirens either.

Despite a last minute court order, most Palestinians in the occupied territories have not been issued with gas masks. Nor have Israel's 10,000 Palestinian detainees who are usually kept in tented compounds near Israeli bases.

But let no one accuse Israel's rulers of being anti-Arab. Immigration minister Rabbi Yitzhak Perez is complaining bitterly about there being too many non-Jews among Soviet immigrants to the country. "35-40 percent of the immigrants arriving in Israel now are not Jews," he told an Israeli newspaper, adding that he wanted to ensure that non-Jewish spouses of Jews "will not sneak into Israel as immigrants."

USING the Gulf War as low cloud cover, the United States government has discreetly revealed the payments it made to Panama's disgraced Manuel Noriega.

From 1955 to 1986, the US army paid the general $162,168. Starting later, in 1971, the CIA paid him $160,058 in the years up until 1986 (George Bush was head of the CIA in 1976/7 and met Pineapple Face as vice-president in the 80s). Being a law abiding chap, Noriega signed receipts for most of the money.

It is likely, however, that he received more money from unofficial CIA slush funds, especially in connection with the Iran Contragate affair where there is evidence to indicate that some of the $80 billion which went missing from Savings and Loans institutions went through the agency's hands to finance its illegal activities.

"It's a Mirage..."

TV

QED

(BBC1)

MUCH COMMENT has been made about the curious attitude of the broadcasting companies towards what can be shown during the Third World War. For example, *The A-Team* has been removed from the Sunday afternoon schedules, presumably because the spectacle of very large Americans going round kicking hell out of people who upset them is considered inappropriate at this time. One hates to point out that the supposedly more palatable replacement, *Charlie's Angels*, in which American girls in bikinis restore world order, would be deeply personally distressing to any members of the Kuwaiti royal family sitting out the war in Claridges.

But, in such a mood of sensitivity, it was surprising that the first programme in the new series of the popular science programme *QED* survived. The film considered Murphy's Law, more commonly known as Sod's Law, but not in BBC titles in the New Mood of Responsibility in Television. Murphy/Sod dictates that "if anything can go wrong, it will." This programme was broadcast in the middle of schedules otherwise devoted to experts explaining how modern American missiles turned round and headed back to the silo if they so much as spotted a civilian walking past their target, how Patriot missiles had a 95 per cent hit rate in practice. And, more to the point, how another Tornado had been lost.

This is a good point. Is the fate of the Tornados — you pay £16 million pounds per plane and then the engine stalls — an illustration of Murphy's Law? No. In fact, it is an illustration of Schwarzkopf's Law, which dictates that, if a certain number of American pilots are asked to fly B-52 bombers at 55,000 feet and an equal number of British pilots are asked to fly Tornados at 300 feet, then, in any given period, more Britons than Americans will hit the runway. Apart from being a vivid symbol of what the Special Relationship means, this is a useful example of the way in which phenomena attributed to Murphy's Law are frequently merely common sense.

This problem undermined the whole programme. The real question was not whether a film on Murphy's Law might be risky during a high-tech war, but whether, even in peace-time, a series as naff as *QED* should risk

an examination of the mechanics of fallibility. Still, at least, on this occasion, there was a built-in excuse for producing a poor documentary.

QED is supposed to be a programme about science. Unfortunately it is intended for a popular BBC1 slot, which means that it spends most of the time pretending not to be about science, favouring the get-out clauses of human interest — a couple hiring a surrogate mother — or wackiness: programmes hosted by Kenny Everett. It is a general rule of television — Rantzen/Wilcox's Law — that no documentary which distrusts the interest of its subject matter will ever be satisfactory: *QED* consistently demonstrates this God-are-we-boring-you? jauntiness.

The show on Murphy/Sod was presented by a proper scientist from Newcastle University, but the central premise was still irredeemably silly. Hadn't we always noticed, asked the scientist, that bread always landed butter side down if dropped and that the other queue in the supermarket always moved faster until you joined it? This was Murphy's Law. But would science verify its conclusions? He asked these questions in the kind of teasy-queasy telly presenter voice, which always makes *Square Eyes*, for one, want to reply, who gives a tuppeny fuck?

Anyway, *QED*, in a relatively interesting stretch of the film, showed the origins of the law in Capt Ed Murphy, who worked on some ill-fated sledge tests at a Californian base. Then, the Newcastle scientist arranged a dozen or so people at tables, buttering and chucking up slices of bread, and positioned a hidden camera in Tesco. It was decisively demonstrated that buttered bread and shopping processions obeyed the usual laws of probability.

Well, what a surprise. As surely every viewer knew already. Murphy's Law is a proverb rather than a scientific theory. *QED* proved this by citing global equivalents, including the Czechs' "While running away from a bear, you meet a wolf" and the Koreans' "Even if you fall on your back, you break your nose." It is a demonstration only of the human tendency to bear even minor irritation as a wound. How typical of the Americans to dress it up as a cod Law. How typical of the British to present science in a facetious series like *QED*.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

DESPITE the huge advantages of the news pooling arrangement, Sky News is having a bloody awful war.

The pool, under which BBC and ITN reports are made available to Sky, and vice versa, is a big financial bonus to the Murdoch satellite station. It is effectively being subsidised by its competitors who field an array of reporters that Sky could never hope to provide from its own resources.

However, there is still scope for editorial initiative at Sky's Osterley studios, which explains why mundane and irrelevant reports are endlessly repeated and why important stories are frequently ignored or abruptly terminated. The expression on Peter Allen-Frost's face when his live report on the deaths in Tel Aviv was halted for a commercial break eloquently summed up the station's performance.

Sky's pisspoor reporting is, however, appreciated by the KGB, which incredibly has taken to relaying Sky broadcasts as some form of mass torture in Lithuania. After sending in troops to seize the television centre in Vilnius, the men from Moscow needed an unlimited supply of anodyne programming. Lithuanians are now being forced to watch a relay of Sky as a replacement for local shows. The Lithuanian government has set up an unofficial station in its besieged parliament building providing uncensored news and comment.

THE SUN has come unstuck in its blatant attempt to puff Sky TV's abysmal leg-over show *Love At First Sight* — a programme so tacky it makes *Blind Date*, its ITV precursor, look like an edition of *Omnibus*.

A recent *Sun* "exclusive" proudly boasted that "sweethearts" John Lyon and Adele Braddock from Heywood, north Manchester, had become engaged after meeting on the programme. The news was echoed by Radio One DJ Bruno Brooks, who compered the episode and gushed: "We have managed what *Blind Date* haven't — the first engagement on *Love At First Sight*. It's great news." This was followed by suitably ecstatic quotes from the toothsome twosome.

The only problem with the story was that it was wholly untrue. Although the lovely couple did indeed meet on *Love At First Sight*, their engagement was just like the *Sun*'s exclusive — a fake.

A few months after their appearance, the programme's producer contacted them, desperate for a sniff of a wedding. John and Adele, mindful of Sky's penchant for fabulist melodrama, faked their engagement which will be broadcast on St Valentine's Day. They didn't agree to be featured in the *Sun* as well — but that's the price you pay for satellite stardom.

AS THE Gulf War entered its second week there was a flurry of activity at Broadcasting House.

The cause of the panic on the fourth floor was an urgent request from the prime minister's office asking the BBC to provide vital radio archive material to assist John Major in his weighty military deliberations. And the nature of this vital operational material? Why the complete set of tapes of *Much Binding In The Marsh*.

CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
BBC TELEVISION CE
"IT'S OUR BIT FOR THE WAR EFFORT..."
THAT'LL SHOW BRITAIN'S RUTHLESS WILL TO WIN...
AND BRING SADDAM HUSSEIN TO HIS KNEES...
BAR
WE'VE DROPPED 'ALLO 'ALLO!"
"Trebles & gasbags all round!"
Ken Pyne

THE PRODUCTION company Open Media would seem to be a lot less open with information than one would expect, and is desperately covering up a dreadful lapse in its internal security.

Viewers of last Saturday's edition of the increasingly dreadful *After Dark* will have witnessed an unexpected raising of the intellectual climate as white wine expert Oliver Reed announced that he would whack his plonker on the table unless he was supplied with mushy peas instantly, in between addressing radical feminist Kate Millett as "Oi, big tits".

But such imbecility paled into insignificance next to the flying circus proceeding in the studio gallery among the production staff who, despite the constant use of television's taboo C-word, were unable to make a decision to take the programme off air. Luckily a bored hoaxer (and amateur programme planner) watching the programme decided to make an editorial decision himself, blagged the producer Sebastian Cody's direct line from Channel 4 reception, and telephoned the gallery. Impersonating Lord Rees-Mogg of the BSC, he announced that "Michael Grade is furious", and then uttered the mystical words: "He wants this bloody shambles off... now!" Without a moment's hesitation, or any attempt to check credentials, the hoaxer was amazed to hear the words "Yes, sir", and moments later to see his own TV screen go blank. This gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "Public Access Television".

Open Media's producer Sebastian Cody has subsequently been attempting to persuade Channel 4 that he responsibly took the programme off the air to sort out Mr Reed. This is a complete lie. And Michael Grade is so incensed by the whole lamentable farrago that he is said to be close to axing the show for good.

WHINGEING playwright Denis Potter has been given his second chance to direct drama despite the universal derision that met his first effort as director — *Blackeyes* for the BBC.

Astonishingly Channel 4's Michael Grade has commissioned Plodder to direct a drama feature called *Secret Friends*. While three BBC employees — production manager Rosie Padraiskas, designer Gary Williamson and film editor Clare Douglas — have agreed to assist Plodder in the project, his previous producers, Ken Trodd and Rik McCallum, are steering well clear.

ESTHER RANCID's *That's Life* special on sex-abuse-ridden Crookham (sic) Court school in Berkshire was not just smugger than usual — it was also somewhat economical with the truth.

Fans of the show's usual blend of singing dogs and saucy signposts who stayed awake long enough witnessed a solemn re-enactment, complete with trial transcripts, of the conviction of the school's principal and two teachers.

Co-presenter Gavin Campbell was quick to suggest where public credit for nailing the miscreants should be directed. "We exposed the scandal of Crookham Court on *That's Life*. Subsequently, the school closed down," he proclaimed in self-righteous tones, before proudly announcing the launch of a "freefone" boarding school line for those needing to complain about concupiscent teachers.

What Campbell failed to mention was that although Rancid's team first broadcast its allegations on Crookham Court on 28 May 1989, the *Newbury Weekly News* had already exposed the scandal in its 16 March edition more than two months earlier.

It was thanks to the *Newbury Weekly News* that Inspector Knacker hauled in school principal Philip Cadman and his two fellow pederasts, and not thanks to La Rancid's team who are now trying to wallow in the glory of another successful public safety campaign.

THE BBC's John Birt, having been fingered by management expert Sir John Harvey Jones, is desperately trying to change his image in the corporation.

Having been a huge spender creating his empire of News and Current Affairs he is now posing as a savage cost-cutter.

Unimpressed Beeb watchers note that he has the most to cut.

I-SKY / BSB

EXTENDED WAR SPECIAL

BOTH the BBC and ITN were licking their wounds today after seeing the satellite station BSkyB break the news of the blitz on Baghdad.

Sky News was the first station in Europe to announce the start of Operation Desert Storm with a shock bulletin at 11.39pm.

ITN caught on around TEN MINUTES later with the BBC limping into action after midnight.

GARRY BUSHELL
The Sun

WHAT kids think about a holiday is vital. That's why eight youngsters have become mini-board directors at Haven.

Their meeting was chaired by BSkyB TV celebrity Keith Chegwin. Their main recommendations: Fines on litter louts; more family quiz shows; and more computer games.

Their other demand — for more BSkyB TVs — has already been carried out.

News of the World

Julian selects CNN and then dips into Sky News. "Stop channel-hopping," barks Kris. "We should be watching the BBC at times of national crisis."

"No chance," says Julian. "The BBC has hardly any news film. It's all boring studio discussions and pathetic phone-in reports."

Thinking about it, Kris has to agree, so they watch the live reports on CNN and Sky.

STEVE REGAN
Today

The foreign ministers' meeting was far advanced when one of Hurd's aides passed him a message. Sky News, which he was watching, had just announced that the Iraq leader had, after all, accepted Bush's offer. Talks were on.

Sunday Times

THE GULF war has sparked a stampede for 4,000 BSkyB satellite dishes a day. Viewers are desperate to get round-the-clock news of the conflict.

BSkyB bosses have been forced to set up a special hotline to deal with inquiries. Thousands of new customers have asked for equipment to be fitted as quickly as possible.

The Sun

ALLAN LAMB had cancer growths removed from his face 24 hours before becoming England's match-winning batting hero yesterday.

The blemishes left on his face by the minor operation were clear on Sky TV as Lamb batted heroically for two-and-a-quarter hours to pull England round as they clinched a 33-run win over New Zealand in the World Series Cup.

The Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Patrick Malpass, Michelle Jones, Simon Lilley, P. O'R. Smiley, M. Turner, Anon.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

DISINFORMATION

CAN THERE be any link between allegations of disinformation exercises in the Gulf and the appearance in the area of several members of the old Northern Ireland disinformation team, aka the Clockwork Orange Gang?

On the day of the first bombardment of Iraq, the army spokesman was one Colonel David McDine. Veteran journalists will remember him as the civilian head of Ministry of Defence information in Northern Ireland in 1974 and early 1975. They may also remember that after Colin Wallace was sacked from that department (where he specialised in disinformation) in 1975, Mr McDine retired because of a heart attack. When he joined the army, became a colonel and got over his heart attack isn't clear.

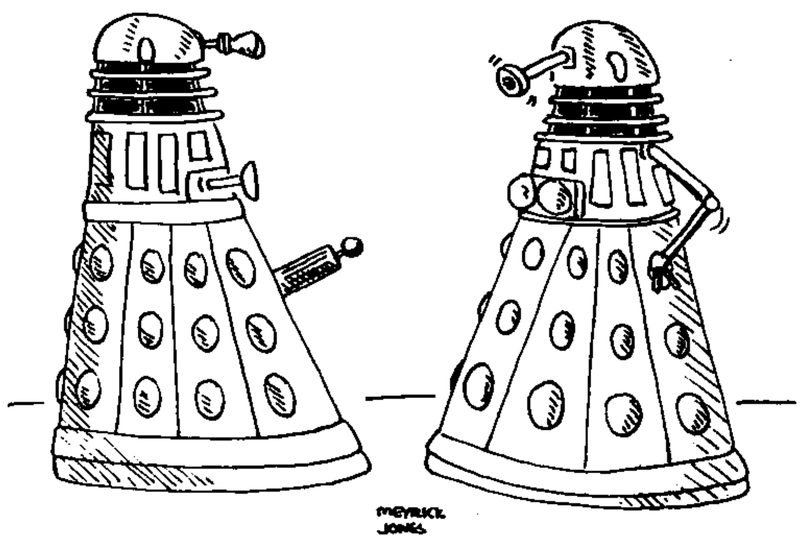
Mr McDine, when he was in Ireland, was in overall charge of information policy, a special unit which dealt in black propaganda. The unit was directly commanded by Colonel Jeremy Railton, who unhappily missed the plane to London in October 1975 when Collin Wallace was appealing against his sacking. The missed plane meant Railton could not explain why Wallace had been sacked. Anyway soon after that Railton retired to a pig farm in Wilts. When he abandoned his pigs for his old career is not clear, but now the colonel and his expertise in black propaganda are somewhere in the Gulf.

It doesn't seem likely that either Railton or McDine will be able to make contact with another exuberant member of the information policy team in Northern Ireland, Dougie Brand. Brand, who is a former colleague of Paddy Ashdown's in the Special Boat Services, was in Iraq recently, apparently working for an oil company. He has been reported missing since the war started, though the Iraqis deny that he is in captivity.

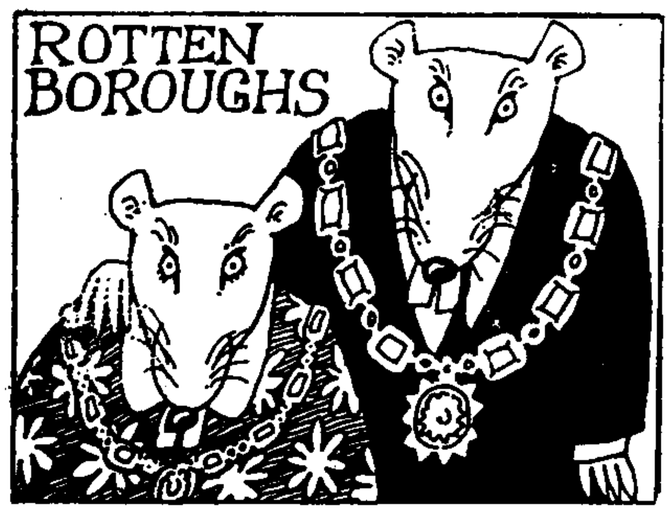
Meanwhile, the row rages between John Stevens, deputy chief constable of Cambridgeshire police, the Royal Ulster Constabulary and British Intelligence over what to do about Brian Nelson, the former head of "intelligence" for the Ulster Defence Association who is being held in an isolated cell in Crumlin Road prison, Belfast.

The police and intelligence want Nelson charged with some minor offence about possession of documents, and then to wash their hands of the whole affair. Stevens ploddingly persists in trying to find out whether the RUC and MI5 knew that they were giving Nelson information which led to no fewer than 17 assassinations of republicans by Protestant ultras.

The latest cheeky move by Stevens has been to send his officers to Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, where they seized a number of intelligence documents and took them to Nelson's cell to ask him about them (*Sunday News*, 6 January). To their surprise Nelson showed a remarkable familiarity with the documents. But then he is keen to demonstrate his associations with intelligence because he is damned if he is going to be punished for handling documents which he claims it was his job as a British intelligence agent to handle, and setting up assassinations which he claims it was his job as British intelligence agent to set up. No decision has yet been taken about what to do with Nelson, and it is difficult to see how the authorities can find a way round this one (as they did with two of Nelson's predecessors, John Miller, now retired on a fat pension in Devon, and Albert Ginger Baker, still in prison after fifteen years).



"Is that a multiphase destructor or are you just pleased to see me?"



TAMESIDE

DESPITE loud local opposition, Labour-controlled Tameside in east Manchester is still determined to bludgeon through its highly unpopular Kingswater Park scheme, a vast new business centre complete with the usual hotel, conference centre and "executive" housing (see *Eye* 750).

The land, owned by North West Water, is currently used by two golf clubs, Denton and Fairfield, along with a variety of exotic Mancunian fowl. Unfortunately, North West Water has allowed continuous tipping to ruin what was once a rare local beauty spot. Only a cynic would suggest that a leafy valley turned decrepit eyesore was ripe for development.

Although opponents recently presented a 20,000-name petition, Kingswater Park has the unflinching support of Tameside council leader Roy Oldham, who swears that the development will go through "come hell or high water".

The bluff, tripe-eating Oldham enjoys staunch support among his Labour colleagues, not least from the councillor who claims that she was evicted by Denton Golf Club as a girl and now appears bent on revenge. Meanwhile, a bizarre revival of class-consciousness has broken out among Labour councillors who deride golf as a "game for the privileged few" — despite the proliferation of mushy pea-stained flat caps and even flat vowels at the two clubs.

Denton Golf Club may yet be Kingswater Park's nemesis: not only does the club oppose the scheme, but it will contest any compulsory purchase order Tameside slaps on it. This would lead to a public inquiry, convened by the environment secretary, which might prove embarrassing for the council — especially if it revealed that the latest planning application allows for "luxury" housing to be built on the site whether or not the business park goes ahead.

This puts the claims of the council and North West Water that the main purpose of the scheme is to create 6,000 jobs in a rather different light.

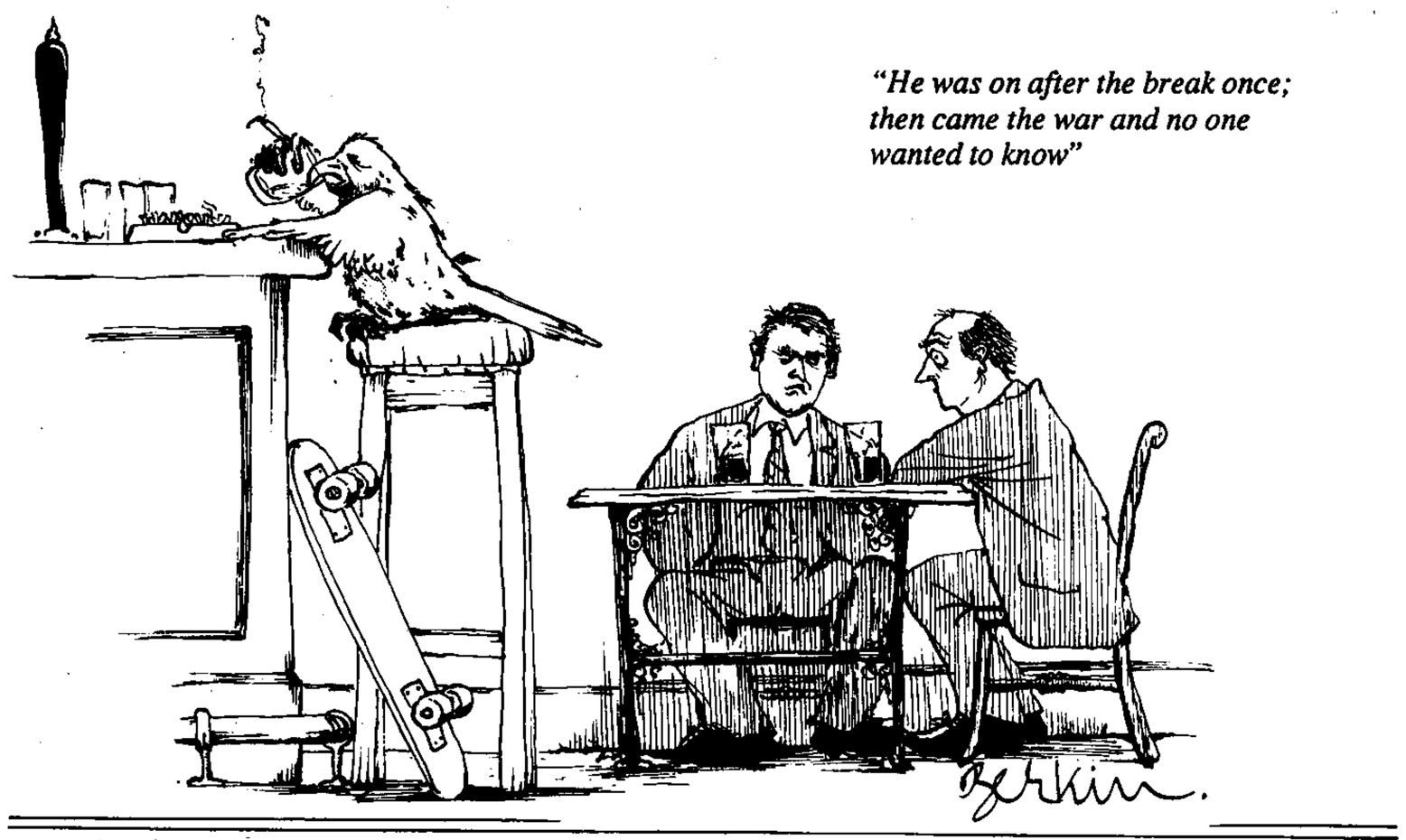
HACKNEY

RACHMAN-like council executives in the impoverished people's republic of Hackney, north-east London, have dreamt up a neat way to extract more cash from their hard-pressed tenants.

With £13 million less grant from the Department of Environment than expected, Hackney recently upped some council rents by a whopping £200 per week. Shocked tenants who were already spending most of their waking hours pleading with social security officials to finance rent bills of as much as £100 a week are now being asked to find £300.

But the tenants need not worry, for they can theoretically meet the new increases simply by applying to the council's ever-popular housing benefits office, whose coffers are permanently and generously stocked by the Government.

Strangely the bureaucrats of the benefit-loving borough forgot to inform their tenants of this — even though they didn't forget to remember to circulate the new bills.



"He was on after the break once; then came the war and no one wanted to know"

BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM'S child care services are still wallowing in the trough of corruption and incompetence created by years of mis-management. A series of new year revelations have shown the emptiness of the city's social services department's promises to put its house in order.

First came the closure of Highgate Close children's home — supposedly for redecoration. In reality the adolescent inmates were out of control. One 14-year-old girl was reported openly soliciting just a few yards from the home. Neighbours had also lodged a series of complaints alleging racial abuse, physical threats and vandalism to their cars and homes.

Then a heavily pregnant social worker was punched in the stomach after being left alone with dangerous youngsters. And at the Uplands children's home on the southern outskirts of the city it was revealed that a senior social worker had been sacked after having sex with a child in care.

At the infamous St John's home in Erdington, a rape investigation was launched after a girl disappeared overnight with three boys. She returned next day to make her allegations but soon withdrew them. Coincidentally, the three boys had been returned to the home the same day.

The rape investigation coincided with the near death of a boy in care who somehow managed to get his hands on enough drugs to take an overdose. Staff at St John's describe the home as "a disaster waiting to happen".

Sadly, for one elderly lady, disaster has already struck. A 15-year-old boy supposedly in the "care" of St John's, broke into her home and savagely beat her, leaving her close to death. She is still in hospital while he is in St John's awaiting sentence — which on past record will see him back on the streets or under the "supervision" of a child care worker in no time at all.

CAMDEN

FOLLOWING the scandal in Islington last year when the council was careless enough to let villains steal streetfuls of valuable old-fashioned flagstones, neighbouring Camden has gone one better. It is stealing them from itself.

One stretch of down-market road in the borough has been waiting for years for its uneven paving stones to be sorted out. But when a council crew turned up in Little Russell Street, Bloomsbury, rather than fix the stones it loaded them on to a lorry and took them away.

Residents bent on calling in Inspector Knacker were assured by Camden that everything was in order: the new "improved" pavement would consist of dainty, modern stones. And what happened to the classy antique slabs that were removed? Why, they're off to a council depot to be used to repair flagstone-paved streets elsewhere in the borough — places like leafy Hampstead where residents need to have their aesthetic sensibilities pandered to. After all, the street from which they were removed, at untold expense, houses mere council tenants.

TUC NEWS

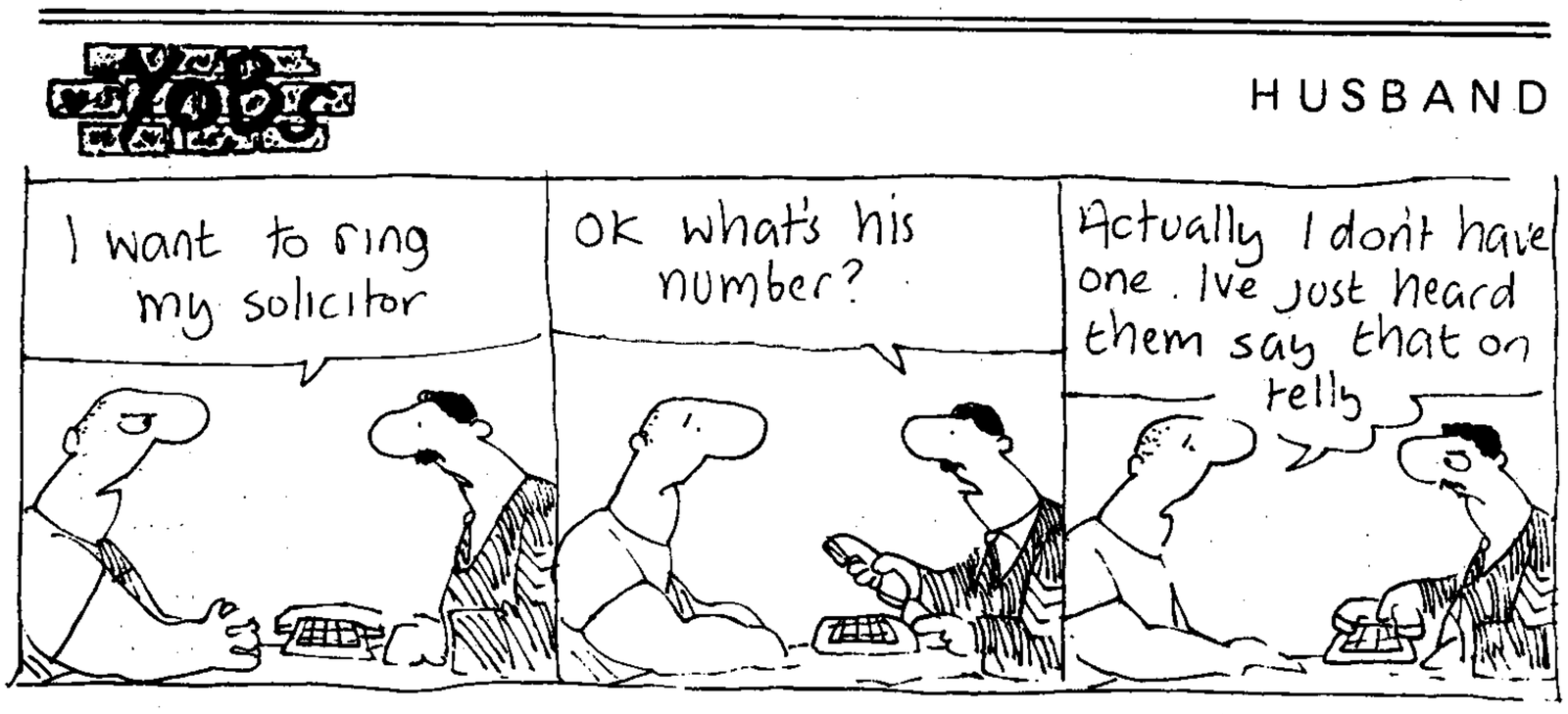
KEN HOMER, general-secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers' Yorkshire area, says in the January issue of *Yorkshire Miner* that his NUM comrades should stop attacking one another and attack the "common enemy instead".

He singles out the foes as British Coal, the Government and the *Daily Mirror*.

What Homer does not mention in the special issue, aimed at exonerating Scargill from any blame for financial wrongdoing during and after the coal strike, is his own professional expertise in helping Scargill establish the International Miners' Organisation with foreign donations meant for the NUM.

Homer was a trustee of the Mineworkers Trust and he and fellow trustees Roger Windsor, former NUM chief executive, and Derbyshire NUM agent Johnny Burrows, allowed Scargill to transfer £300,000 of donations from the National Union of Railwaymen to the IMO in Dublin. The NUR money had been donated to the NUM to relieve the NUM's financial problems and to help the starving strikers and their families.

For a while the cash resided in the Mineworkers' Trust bank account at Sheffield and Scargill then ordered it to be transferred to the IMO in Dublin. Scargill eventually repaid the money to the NUR but without interest — a decision which cost Jimmy Knapp's hard-up NUR around £100,000 in lost interest over three-and-a-half years.



THE European Commission's long campaign to channel taxpayers' money into the bank accounts of farmers has taken an extraordinary turn.

Ever since the GATT talks collapsed under the weight of Euro export subsidies, commissioner Ray MacSharry and his army of bureaucrats have been looking for new ways to hand out other people's cash. And they've come up with a brilliantly simple wheeze. Instead of paying farmers fistfuls of ecus for growing food nobody wants, why not just pay them the fistfuls of ecus?

The idea is to stuff the money into plain brown envelopes and to send it to farmers, whatever they're doing with their land. That way they will be able to snooze under the olive trees without producing all those ghastly grain mountains that so incense the Americans.

The beauty of the scheme is that the smallest farmers pick up the biggest wads, thus demonstrating a touching change of heart by the Euro cash dispensers. During the 1970s their aim was to promote bigger farms. They spent billions encouraging some farmers to expand and billions more paying off the ones who were displaced. Now the jovial hosts of the great Eurofarm gameshow want to splash out further billions encouraging the now bigger farmers to get small again.

Unfortunately the milk sheiks who run the National Farmers' Union are decidedly sick at the plan. They've spent years building vast agro-empires in the hope of cleaning up on the subsidies and now the commission is threatening to pay out the lion's share to Italian peasants.

However, the UK barley barons have no need to panic. They too can qualify for the weekly farmers' giro. To do so they only have to agree to put a third of their land into set-aside, the EC's special subsidy for growing weeds. First they're paid for not growing crops on their land — and then they can claim the new handout for not bothering to get up in the morning.

THE WEEKLY freesheet *Farming News* ***reports an enthusiastic response from readers for its latest defence against the anti-farm brigade, a handy little booklet called*** *Farming Facts.*

It claims to give readers the ammunition to fight back at the growing menace of farmer-bashing, but its choice of "facts" is somewhat curious. For example, in scotching the "myth" that pesticides leave harmful food residues, the booklet cites a 1986 Ministry of Agriculture report showing that less than 1 per cent of samples contained any "recordable" level of residues.

Why, Old Muck wonders, doesn't a guide to the true facts quote the later 1990 MAFF report that shows that no fewer than one third of food samples contained residues? Maybe it's the poor postal service to Hoechst, the chemical giant who funded the "fact-filled" booklet.

OFFICIALS at the Department of Pollution have been thrown into a quiver at the appearance in tap water of a brace of weedkillers called atrazine and simazine. In some samples levels have broken official EC limits.

Technically these particular chemicals shouldn't be there at all, says Whitehall. Although farmers have been sloshing them about for 20 years or so, they're not used in such vast quantities as many other pesticides. So why these two and not a hundred other nasties?

The DoE has instructed its boffins to carry out an urgent "emergency review". Which means nothing more will happen for several months. Meanwhile the NFU — slogan "give us the lolly and we'll look after the countryside" — is wondering what the fuss is about. As far as the farmers are concerned the remedy's obvious: just up the EC limits a point or two and there'll be no problem.

Sporting Life

SUPPORTERS of Goffs managing director Philip Myerscough have been quick to deride suggestions in the last *Eye* that the company is in serious financial trouble.

The official line is still that the catastrophic drop in turnover at last October's yearling sale was merely a reflection of a worldwide trend and not due to managerial incompetence. At lunch one day during the sales week, Vere Wynn-Jones, one of the regime's three PR men, was observed imploring Jonathan Irwin to echo this line if invited to comment by the press.

Myerscough meanwhile has been trying to blame the debacle not simply on Irwin himself but also on Robert Sangster, whose decision to transfer the 50 yearlings he either owned or had shares in to Newmarket cost Goffs an estimated £6 million. The day before the Wynn-Jones representations Myerscough had ambushed Irwin, also in the Goffs restaurant, and accused him of being responsible for the disastrous sales figures. Then almost in the same breath he pleaded with him to try to persuade Sangster to change his mind. Irwin retorted that the ball was now in Myerscough's court and that he, Irwin, was out of the company at the company's behest.

Myerscough opened up a second front on Sangster in an interview in the *Irish Field* a week later. Without the loss of Sangster's yearlings, he claimed, the downturn would only have been 25 percent and not a third. So that's all right then. "Not only that," he added, but "his own lack of presence with his entourage took away from the atmosphere of the sale." Well, well, well. The man who for nearly 10 months had been insisting that his and Dargan's sober new Goffs neither needed nor wanted the Irwin-Coolmore razzmatazz was now complaining that its absence had ruined his show.

Sangster subsequently hit back that as a major shareholder in Goffs he would hardly be likely to discriminate actively against the company and that its dismal results bore "heavily against my investment". He had "always been most open" in his misgivings about the present chairman and management team and repeated that "only a change of management" would bring him back to his original stance. In Ireland it is privately believed that Sangster has been seeking to offload his shareholding for some time but that prospective buyers share his dim view of the company's prospects.

The revolt by Irish breeders against the Dargan methods goes much further than the Airlie-Coolmore-Firestone axis. The IBH takeover was opposed by all Goffs bloodstock directors with the exception of the Aga Khan. Only the power of the non-breeding interests voted it through. The smaller breeders were incensed by the lack of support they received prior to the sales. "Irwin always came round and asked us if everything was all right and wished us luck but this crew couldn't care less," declared the former Goffs director Sean Collins of Corbally Stud.

As to the IBH secretary Carol and the missing £20,000, Myerscough has yet to comment in public. Nor has he expanded on the attempted £6,000 pay-off to Charlie Murless, who apparently had to pay for his plane ticket when representing Goffs at the 1990 Festival of British Racing at Ascot. Perhaps the six grand was a belated repayment.

'Major Bonkers'

FOOTBALL NEWS

THE $64,000 question facing football fans is whether Robert Maxwell's public campaign to sell Derby County and buy Tottenham Hotspur is NOT just a red herring for a more serious bid to gain control of England's most lucrative club, Manchester United.

Throughout the current football season Maxwell has unsuccessfully tried to relinquish his chairmanship of unloved and unwanted Derby while rumours abound (not least in his *Daily Mirror*) that he is to sink millions in financially floundering Tottenham. But while Cap'n Bob has been strangely reluctant to accept offers on Derby or to seize the initiative at the ailing, potentially-powerful North London outfit, another of his former targets, Manchester United, has put up For Sale signs.

The fabulously wealthy United is to offer shares worth more than £12 million to the public at the end of season. The announcement was made at the club's recent annual general meeting by chairman Martin Edwards, himself set to gain around £7.5 million from selling half his 500,000-share stash.

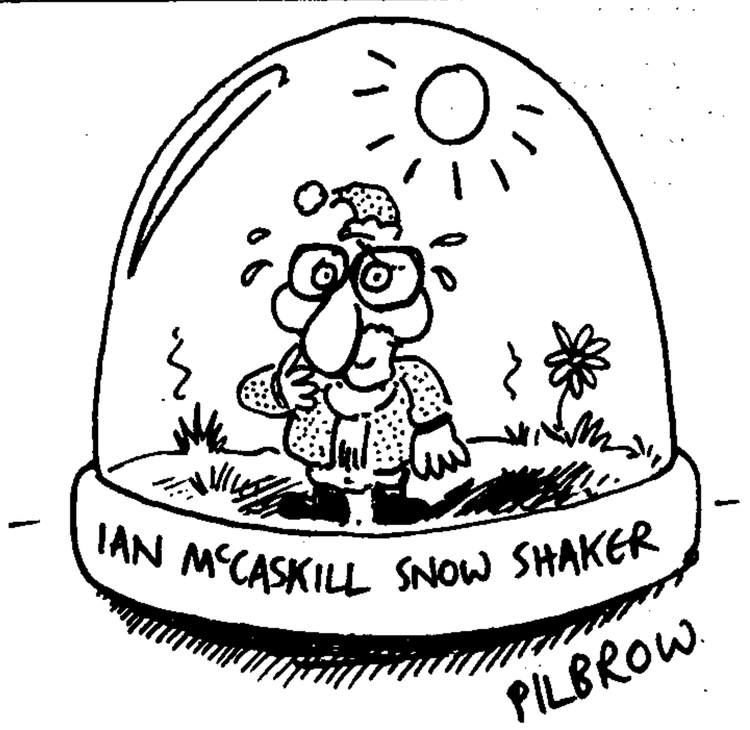
But why should Manchester fans believe Edwards' subsequent claims about his long-term commitment to the club? Prior to the AGM he had been trying to relinquish control for years. He first discussed a possible flotation in 1984 with merchant bankers Kleinwort Benson, but made a "conscious decision not to go down that road". Now he seems to have changed his mind.

In 1989 Edwards tried to sell the club to unknown businessman Michael Knighton, who emerged from nowhere with a £20 million bid. In September that year Knighton announced: "The deal is foolproof and conclusive." Chairman Edwards replied: "I never had any doubts." By October the takeover had been overtaken by unforeseen difficulties — Knighton didn't have enough money.

The ensuing farce of Edwards seeking an injunction against the man about whom he "never had any doubts" was overshadowed by the shareholders' fury when they discovered that Knighton was considering selling his stake, before he had even acquired it, at a massive profit. Edwards, they considered, had been hoodwinked by a salesman with a smooth line of patter.

Manchester United now needs roughly £12 million to refurbish its Old Trafford ground in line with Lord Taylor's call for all-seat stadia by the mid-90s. The flotation could bring in just that amount. But while many hacks believe that Edwards' announcement will finally bring to an end the 10-year speculation about the club's ownership, the fun is only just beginning.

After all, at £30 a throw, few of United's Bovril-drinking "Scally" fans will be able to grab any of the action. The venture is only of significance to those with a large disposable income, which could be the cue for Cap'n Bob to throw his not inconsiderable frame into the ring and rekindle interest in the club for which he unsuccessfully bid £10 million in 1984.



Sally Deedes

COMPILING complicated quarterly VAT returns can be nightmarish and errors attract stiff penalties. But it can be more nightmarish for some than others.

Take the case of James Hullah, for example, a solicitor in Nailsea, Avon, who ran into difficulties with Customs and Excise officers over his VAT affairs.

Mr Hullah is chairman of the local Rotary Club, lecturer in law at Bristol Polytechnic and senior partner of Hullah and Hullah, a firm of solicitors occasionally called upon to help the Crown Prosecution Service in prosecuting local villains. Mr Hullah has himself recently been spared the embarrassment of prosecution, even after VAT investigators found proof of his being guilty of several "irregularities".

Asking Mr Hullah for a receipt on money paid to him should have been no problem for his clients. But on occasions Mr Hullah's response was that since the matter had been dealt with informally, no receipt should be necessary. If one were issued, the bill would be substantially increased by the addition of VAT.

In a heated exchange one client insisted on an invoice being prepared, arguing that "plumbers and builders could not be expected to follow the law if solicitors did not". Several weeks later the client received back his old cheques and noted that money paid to Mr Hullah had been credited to a personal account at the Bristol and West Building Society. Sensing all was not as it should be, the client forwarded this to the VAT office who later told him an investigation had "revealed similar irregularities".

Questioned about the personal Bristol and West account, Mr Hullah at first denied all knowledge of what had happened; but when Customs officers produced the stamped cheques he admitted he had misled them.

Since then, however, nothing has happened — no prosecution and no rapping of the knuckles. It is to be hoped that Hullah and Hullah is never called upon to prosecute others whose VAT returns or banking procedures are not up to scratch!

INSURANCE companies can be very canny and, as a Mr Jones of London found to his cost, it is vital to read all the small print on some insurance documents.

On the day he received notification that his application for a Visacard had been accepted, he was also invited to take up a payment protection insurance plan arranged by Girobank through the Consolidated Marine and General Insurance Company Ltd.

Its leaflet stated: "If you are away from work for more than 30 days due to illness, accident or unemployment, 10 percent of your outstanding balance will be paid." It added: "The above is only a brief summary of the cover we provide." Presuming, not unreasonably, that "illness, accident or unemployment" covered most medical eventualities, Mr Jones duly took out the insurance.

In October 1990 he became ill with depression and his doctor advised him to take two months off work. After 30 days he made a claim for his month's Visacard repayment and a form was duly sent to his doctor, filled in and sent back. But cover was refused since his illness was subject to an exclusion clause — that any problem "wholly or partly resulting from psychotic or psychoneurotic or other mental disorders" were not covered by the policy.

While Mr Jones admits that he was at fault for not having read all the small print, he does not see why the policy should exclude mental illness. A Visa spokesman told me: "We buy the insurance policy from an outside company and are not in a position to change things. But it is quite a standard clause, we understand, and is put in to protect us from people who don't feel like working. However, if this gentleman appeals, in certain cases it would be possible to go back to the doctor and the decision could be reversed".

A spokesman for MIND, the national association for mental health, said: "The law does not prevent this kind of discriminatory 'picking-off' of such groups. There are progressive companies who operate more humane policies, but this is a classic example of what we fight against. As an organisation we are very keen to press for a law, such as is operated in America, Canada and more recently France, which would greatly reduce the power of insurance groups to use such discriminatory powers."

P&O NEWS

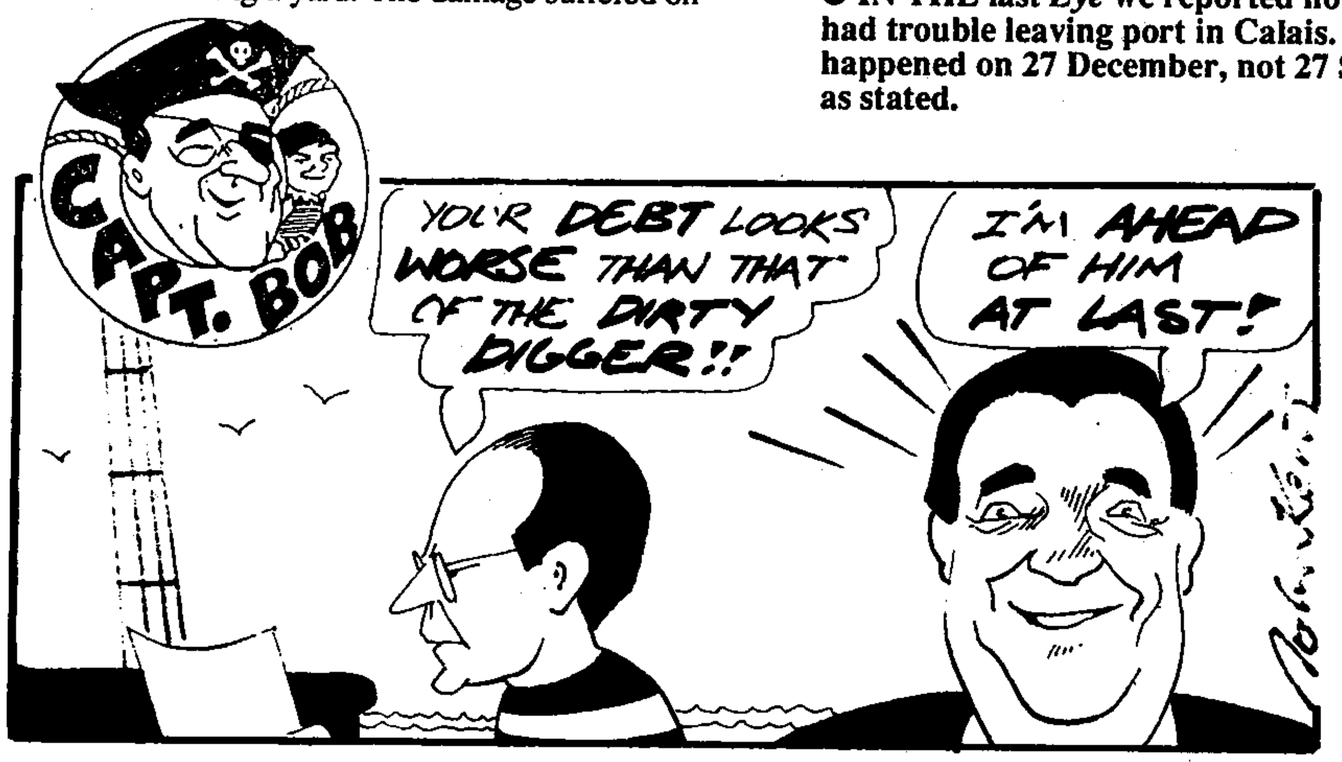
MORE ABOUT the Sealink ferries Fantasia and Fiesta (see last *Eye*).

The Fantasia has spent much of the last two months in dock. After the little trouble with the bow doors (oh, no, not them again) last December, she was whipped off to a repair yard on the Tyne where they tried to get the doors to work. Back in service on 8 January, she was trapped by high winds at Dover and passengers had to stay six hours on board without travelling a yard. The damage suffered on this occasion is now being repaired at Rotterdam.

Fantasia and Fiesta are said to be heartsick for their sister, Zenobia. The three ships were built together in 1980 and were originally put to work to ferry lorries between Yugoslavia and Syria. Alas, the Zenobia got into a little trouble off Cyprus, where she capsized in a few seconds and sank to the bottom of the sea where colour supplement photographers sometimes snap her being eaten by the fishes.

Readers might be frightened by all this information into booking their next cross-channel trip with Sealink's rival, P&O. They might try the Pride of Kent, which was called The Spirit of Free Enterprise when it was built. The name had to be changed because its design was exactly the same as another ferry with a similar name, the Herald of Free Enterprise. If you want to know what happened to that ship, you can always write to the Chairman of P&O, Lord Sterling of Zeebrugge.

● **IN THE last *Eye* we reported how Fiesta had had trouble leaving port in Calais. The incident happened on 27 December, not 27 September, as stated.**



Letters

© Private Eye

War wounds

Sir,

Re your Page 5 "cartoon" about dead British soldiers arriving at Heathrow airport.

1. It isn't funny.

2. It is in extremely bad taste.

Perhaps you consider it so appallingly "sick" that this makes it humorous. Whatever you may think about the Gulf War is it a fair or decent action to mock those who are killed in it?

Yours faithfully,
T.P. NORBURY,

nr Malvern, Worcs.

Sir,

I feel that I must protest at the insensitive nature of your cartoon in the "Colour Section" of the 18 January edition of your "organ". This was beneath you. I hope you will take no further opportunities to crack a joke at the expense of young men and women who are prepared to make a greater sacrifice than either you or I am for our country, and the future peace of our world.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCES PARRY,

Newport Pagnell, Bucks.

Sir,

Is the cartoon "Heathrow Arrivals" a bit of disguised "peace" propaganda or just an example of extremely bad taste?

In any case please cancel my subscription.

Yours faithfully,
MAJOR T.A.E. POLLOCK,

Shrewsbury, Salop.

Sir,

Congratulations on Newman's staggeringly tasteless and ill-timed cartoon of undertakers at Heathrow Airport in issue 759. I feel bound to warn you that I now have every intention of taking out a gift subscription for a friend.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON COBBY,

Cambridge.

Discudsted

Sir,

I think the cover of this week's issue was in very bad taste.

To show Saddam Hussein's picture and add the words about how many people does he have to kill in order to get a Nobel Peace Prize is lowering the tone of PE.

I suspect whoever put the cover together wanted to point out a hypocrisy. However, in times of war, it is grossly offensive to the human beings serving in the Gulf, and to ordinary Iraqi people, many of whom have fled from Iraq.

No doubt you would seek to justify the cover, that is to be expected.

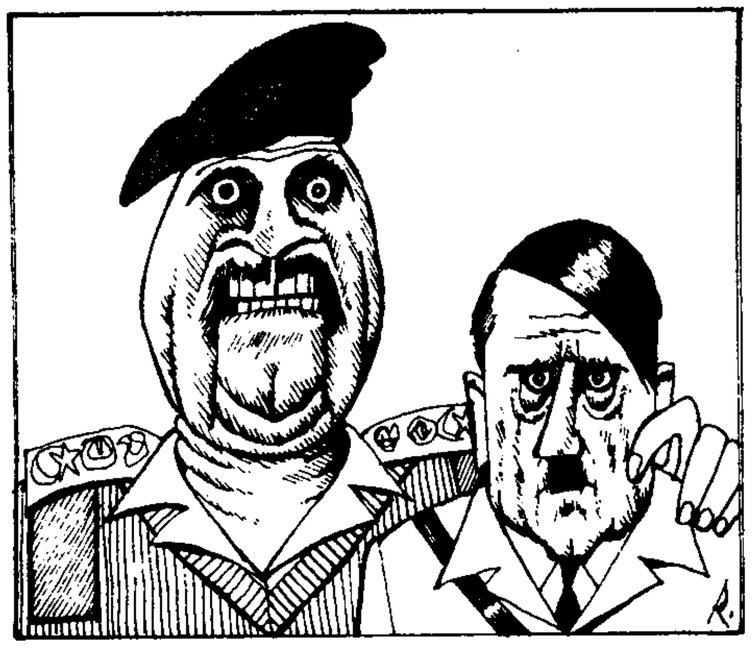
Please be advised, however, that such trite comment has no place against the background of what may become the bloodiest conflict in history. I hope the war is concluded as soon as possible.

I usually enjoy Private Eye, but please avoid lowering the paper's tone — leave that to some of the trashy tabloids, I don't want to compare PE to ANY *of them!*

Yours faithfully,
MR TREVOR SWISTCHEW
S.N.C. (Comm),

Edinburgh.

Anagram



Sir,

You may be interested to know that the anagram of Saddam Hussein gives us a clear view of his place in our history: "Did same as Huns."

Up yours sincerely,
PAUL WILKINSON,

Turku, Finland.

Windbag of war

Sir,

I have been reading Private Eye regularly for 375 years, and I feel I will have to cancel my subscription, sadly. Your cover of Saddam Insane was beyond the pale. I was shocked, more shocked than the last time I cancelled my subscription over the Aids advert.

Luckily my dog saw the funny side.

Yours faithfully,
COL. BLAH BLAH BLAH (rtd),

Aberdeen.

Cut and thrust

Sir,

Censorship in the Gulf War

I can't understand your criticism of the MoD censors who find pictures of troops "with limbs hanging on by shreds of flesh" unacceptable. Would YOU *like such pictures of* YOUR *son being used to sell newspapers or to provide entertainment for bored viewers?*

With regard to your para on hawk-spotting: Hussein has sacked Kuwait systematically for six months now, refused point blank to withdraw — I have had "first hand experience in war" (Italy and N. Africa) and I can tell you that I wholeheartedly support the action taken against Hussein — it should have been done six months ago.

Why do you consider that in order to be satiric you have to give comfort to this country's enemies?

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES SOLOMAN,

York.

Bullet-ins

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the remarkable similarity between the One O'Clock News, the Two O'Clock News, the Three O'Clock News, the Four O'Clock News, etc, etc?

Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
M.M. COLLINS,

London N1.

Petting officers

Sir,

Grovel's suggestion (Eye 757) that I once had a romantic liaison with the now — fortunately — deposed Leaderene is a watered down version of an earlier Eye allegation that I first introduced her to the joys of love at Oxford. Sue Grabbit and Runne regarded this as a defamatory aspersion on my taste in women and you printed my denial. Please don't repeat the tale.

Incidentally, have you ever wondered why Margaret Roberts was at Oxford in 1943 when women were liable to be conscripted at 18? Only medical and science students were exempt, although those eager to serve King and Country deferred university until after the war.

Margaret opted for the cloisters, doubtless encouraged by the ever protective Alderman Roberts, although her subsequent brief career as a research chemist (including being rejected by ICI) suggests it was never her forte.

What a waste. A few years in an ATS barrack room might have broadened her understanding of society and spared the nation, particularly the poorest in it, the social havoc she wreaked as prime minister.

Yours faithfully,
IAN WALLER,

Amberley, Gloucestershire.

Litho...

Sir,

Permit me to correct three inaccuracies in your brief item which referred to Pete Sawyer of Printing World — January 18.

1. Pete was not sacked — he took voluntary redundancy.

2. The quote "good scoop from the MoD" was unearthed by the editor of Printing World, Gareth Ward.

3. Printing World, which is part of the Benn Group, is owned by United Newspapers Plc and no longer has any connection with the Benn family.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL STEFFENS,

Publisher, Printing World, Tonbridge, Kent.

...offset

Sir,

Your account of my sudden departure from Printing World contained a number of inexactitudes. I was not sacked but merely invited to accept voluntary redundancy. Another reporter on Printing World, Bernard Anghelides, received a similar invitation which, alas, he simply could not refuse.

We have since been assured by Benn Bros Ltd — now owned by United Newspapers — that our taking leave of our desks has nothing whatsoever to do with our joint revelation that the Government has ordered the printing of millions of reply-paid call-up papers.

Yours, on the wing,
PETE SAWYER,

London SW11.

Vegetable matter

Sir,

The trouble with the Vegetarian Society is that as one suffering from osteo-arthritis and on a suitable diet, I do indeed have to check carefully every label bearing their logo.

Perhaps they can explain to me how long milk and cheese have come from vegetarian sources. Until then, I shall treat their name and claims with disdain.

Any suggestion that what I really need is a "Vegan Society" seal of approval is mere chicanery: their claim is to be vegetarian, not "well, sort of vegetarian but not really if you see what I mean."

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH R. LAKE,

London E17.

O.B.N.

Di crowns Derby

TODAY the Princess of Wales is spending the whole day in South Derbyshire. We can't believe our luck: we feel as if we have *arrived.* So now I'm off to have lunch with her, and will wonder at her slim figure and lovely face. I shall still be starry-eyed when I see you next week.

EDWINA CURRIE MP
Today

Submitted by Marianne Haylett

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Points failure

Sir,

Congratulations on your excellent exposé of the sell-out of BREL and the Department of Transport's removal of British Rail's right to compensation when the newly-privatised supplier delivers Sprinter trains 17 months late.

It is indeed pathetic that some BR managers do not stand up more for their industry. Those of us having to put up with trains over 30 years old and fare increases above the rate of inflation are getting a little tired of some BR spokespersons who keep putting a brave face on it and casting around red herrings rather than criticising the restraints imposed upon them by the Government.

In that situation, it is left to the independent voluntary body for rail users, the Railway Development Society, to do so; and we welcome applications to join our growing numbers of members.

Yours gratefully,
TREVOR GARROD,

General Secretary, Railway Development Society, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

"I love a parade!"

I-SPY *Wyoming, USA*

Submitted by Monica Barry. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Off the cuff

Sir,

There is an acknowledgement, of sorts, of Colin Dexter's indebtedness to The Daughter of Time on the dust-jacket blurb (inside front). Whether this is "in the book", or whether, indeed, it was written by Mr Dexter — or whether, finally, this earns £5 — I cannot be sure.

Good worming!

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HART,

Malvern, Worcs.

Brought to book

Sir,

In your recent Behind the Scenes item on Barbara Jones and the Sonia Sutcliffe case you accuse her of "protecting her lucrative book contract with Weidenfeld" at the expense of Private Eye and the truth. There has been no book contract between Miss Jones and Weidenfeld, agreement to publish, payment or anything else that could remotely justify this pointless mistake.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER FALKUS,

Publishing Director, George Weidenfeld & Nicholson Ltd, London SW4.

Barbie droll

Sir,

I write with a belated apology for my failure to respond to your invitation to Lord Gnome's Christmas party on December 19.

You may recall that I had other pressing matters on my mind at the time, for example representing myself in the High Court case against the News of the World and Sonia Sutcliffe.

Your reporters and lawyers there seemed most understanding. They offered me moral support, encouragement and — finally — congratulations. One of them went so far as to kiss me sympathetically on the cheek each day in greeting and farewell.

It was not until your last edition was published, therefore, that I realised how miffed you must have been, deep down, at my rudeness in not attending your festive celebrations. The vicious hatchet job you did certainly taught me a lesson in manners.

The least I can do now is to invite you to a little do I'm planning. It's the inaugural meeting of my Sackcloth and Ashes Club for all those involved in litigation who are too lazy and incompetent to win their own court cases, and instead leave it to others to do the dirty work.

I thought a public flogging in the market place might be a good start, date to be fixed. Kindly RSVP.

Yours faithfully,
BARBARA JONES,

London SW18.

● *For more keeping up with the Jones see STREET OF SHAME.*

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"The fruits of the labours coming home to roost..."
LADY VICTORIA LEATHAM, BBC1
(Zofia Cywinska)

"They were twins... well, they were born ¾hour apart so not really twins."
SIMON BATES, RADIO1
(Doug Alexander)

"He's got a little notch in his brain which he turns off."
FRANK BRUNO, BBC1
(M.L. Allsop)

"...his brilliant performance in One Claudius"
TERRY WOGAN, BBC1
(Anthony Barr)

Policeman: *Do you speak German? Or French?*
Lorry driver: *Only Czech.*
Policeman: *Driving here is verboten.*
FIRST TUESDAY, ITV
(Richard J. Green)

Letter from Haiti

from Our Own Correspondent

THE SIGHT of the papal nuncio fleeing a machete-wielding mob in his underpants and the ex-hardman of the Baby Doc dictatorship sobbing on a barrack-room floor has reminded us all here that the post-election fun may be only just beginning.

The cast is more than worthy of the Papa Doc era figures drawn in Graham Greene's *The Comedians*: Dr Roger Lafontant, full-time Duvalierist and part-time torturer, plays the baddie; the Very Reverent Jean-Bertrand Aristide, now president-elect and occasional Jesus Christ stand-in, plays the goodie; and the crowd, baying for blood in a vein that would have made Robespierre jealous, play themselves. There is a walk-on non-speaking part for the US ambassador as a loaded donkey, or a *bouk chargé*, as he is nicknamed in Créole.

The plot so far. Dr Lafontant returns to Haiti from exile to claim his inheritance as Baby Doc's successor as president for life and leader of the remnants of the Tonton Macoute goonshow. Cruelly denied by "the devil" Aristide, one of the few opponents he failed to torture to death in Fort Dimanche, he marches into the icing-cake National Palace to announce a *coup d'état*, only to find that most of the army — induced and threatened by turn by the loaded donkey's master in Washington — has changed sides.

Disappointed that they can't lynch him, the hysterical Aristide crowd stomp around Port-au-Prince satisfying themselves with *dechoukajs* (uprootings) of sundry other opponents — alleged Macoutes, establishment church figures, anyone else with known Duvalierist sympathies.

Gingerbread-style houses in exclusive neighbourhoods are stripped as if by a plague of locusts; the cathedral and Vatican embassy are burnt and dismantled; salvaged construction material is carted off back to the slums. The US ambassador escapes, barely disguised as a loaded donkey, down the dirt track that fronts the embassy.

If it all sounds incredible, it would be anywhere but here. Where else in the world could you win a landslide victory in a presidential election by shamelessly proclaiming yourself a "Kok Kalite" — a quality cock? Where else, even in the Caribbean, would the electoral council dispatch ballot papers to polling stations by local "tap-tap" bus six hours after voting should have started?

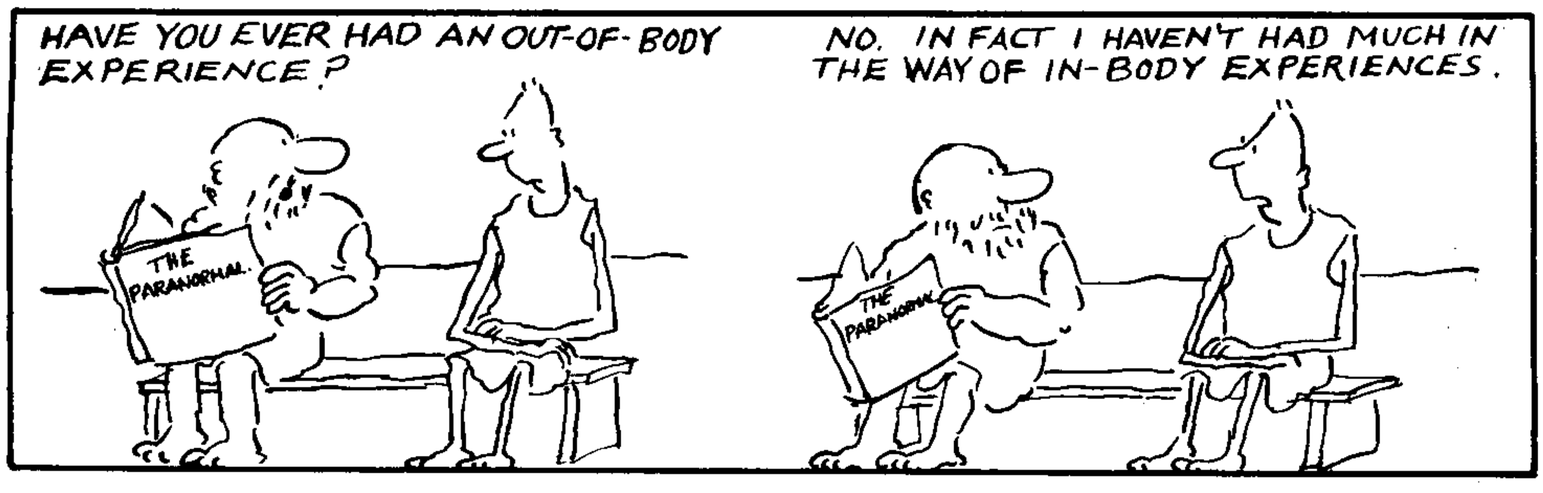
None of this seems to matter if you can tap into the deep voodoo-based spiritualism of Haitians by consciously portraying yourself as the Messiah and survive a few assassination attempts as proof. Riding donkeys, preaching parables to political rallies and offering himself as "a sacrifice to the sanctity of justice", Pere Aristide continues his triumphal progress towards inauguration as president on 7 February.

Only the media, as bloodthirsty as the crowd but less discriminating about who they film being macheted or burnt to death, will be disappointed. "Things going right in Haiti? A non-story!" lamented one battle-hardened hack, checking out of *The Comedians* Oloffson Hotel after the poll. "Book me a room when things pick up again."

That might be sooner than anyone expects. "No one doubts his morality but Aristide hasn't a clue where he's going," says one old colleague from the church. "The whole country's on a sort of magical mystery tour." A particularly truculent taxi-driver is even more explicit. "Everyone hates everyone here. Perhaps that's why they call it Haiti... What will happen? Who knows. This is Haiti."

At the Oloffson, one instinctively checks the swimming pool where Mr Brown, the *Comedian* proprietor, was greeted by the hunched body of the minister of social welfare. The water was murky enough to be hiding half the cabinet.

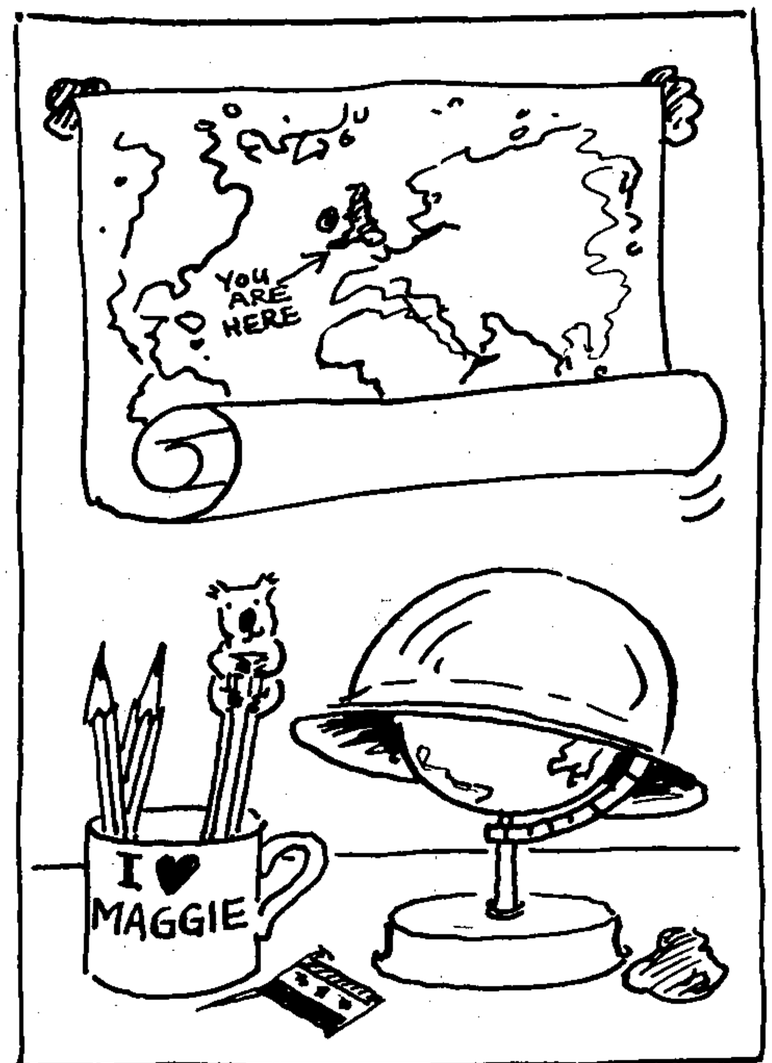
HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN


HAVE YOU EVER HAD AN OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE?
THE PARANORMAL
NO. IN FACT I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH IN THE WAY OF IN-BODY EXPERIENCES.
THE PARANORMAL

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Wednesday

Today is the big day we have all been waiting for. The *Daily Telegraph* coloured map of the world arrives! It comes with a note from Mr Hurd saying that I should put it up on the wall behind my desk. He says it will help me to know where all the places are when the war starts. My first key decision comes almost immediately. Should I use drawing pins, or blu-tac? I decide on the latter, as it has always been Mrs Thatcher's favourite colour! When the map is finally put up, I spend some considerable period of time



studying it. Iraq is really quite big, compared with, say, Israel. I am glad to see, however, that America is bigger than both of them!

Wednesday night

I get a phone call in the middle of the night on my special grey telephone hotline. It is Mr Bush. Why do Americans never remember that we are asleep when they are awake?! He says that he has had to start the war without me, as he couldn't get through earlier, and he hopes that that's alright. I tried to think of something memorable to say, and luckily it came to me in a flash. "Oh yes," I said, but he had already hung up.

Thursday

We have the first meeting of our new War Cabinet. Me, Douglas, Mr King, my friend Chris Patten and, of course, Norma Lamont from next door. Norma kicked things off in great style by telling a joke about Saddam Hussein and a dead camel. We all laughed although I did not get the last bit. Then Douglas turned to me and said: "Well, Prime Minister, what are our war aims?" Honestly, Douglas can be very slow sometimes for someone who's been to Oxford! "We are aiming at Iraq of course," I said firmly, pointing at where it was on the map.

Then I told them that I had had a very long telephone call from Mr Bush in the middle of the night. They were very impressed. "Oh yes," I said, "it went on for some considerable period of time." My friend Chris smiled and said: "About a minute, I suppose.". "Oh no," I said, "not that long."

Friday

We have had a lot of letters about the war. It is amazing how many of them forgot to put on the postcode, SW1 1PLC — which you would have thought was pretty easy to remember!

Saturday

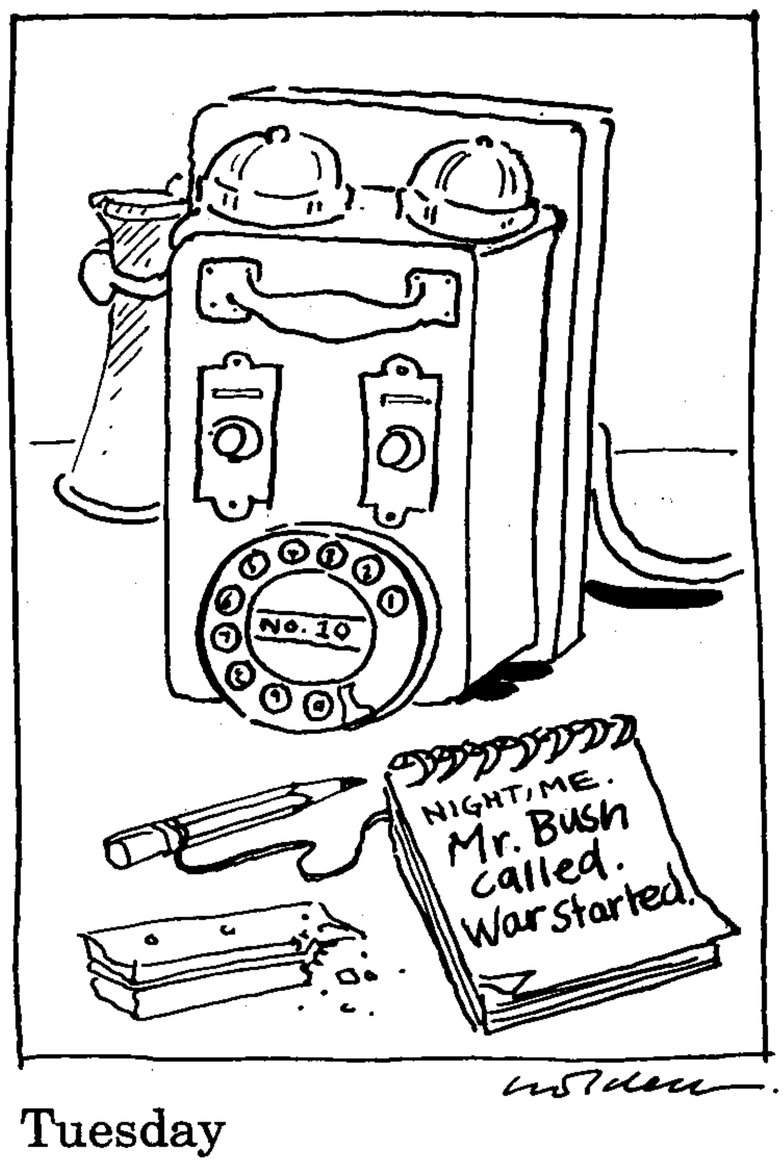
Today Norman and I had to go to Chequers (Mrs Thatcher's country house, which she has lent me while I am Prime Minister). First we had to go back to Graylings — that's our real home in the country — to fetch some towels and my pocket calculator, which I left there last weekend. On the way I told Norman about my top-secret phone call from the President of America. "But you're not to tell anyone," I told her, "because it is still meant to be classified." "Don't be silly," she said. "It was on the 9 o'clock news last night." I was very annoyed at this "leak". In Mrs Thatcher's day someone would have had to spend more time with their family over something like this. "If it was a leak," Norman said, "I bet it was your friend Norma. I've never trusted him since that party at Jeffrey Archer's when he and that actress got stuck in the lift together."

Sunday

Today we had to go to church and be photographed. I wore my new grey suit. The service was very nice but it went on for a considerable period of time. The vicar made a special prayer about peace, and he asked for divine help to strengthen all world leaders in their efforts for peace. He then gave me a long hard look. I wonder why? Perhaps he thought my choice of tie (Old Rutlishians — light grey stripe on dark grey background) was inappropriate.

Monday

Norman is still in a sulk with me. While I was eating my Weetabix (2½ today), I told her: "If you go on like this, I shall have to call you Stormin' Norman." This was because of the American in Arabia who has been telling me what my plans are for the war. She didn't see the joke, unfortunately.



Tuesday

Today I have to make a Big Speech in the House of Commons. Mr O'Donnell says that I should speak for some considerable period of time, and that it is very important that I should not just sound like a dalek. "Not that you do, of course, Prime Minister," he added hurriedly. "Oh yes," I replied, "I am my own man. I will obey."

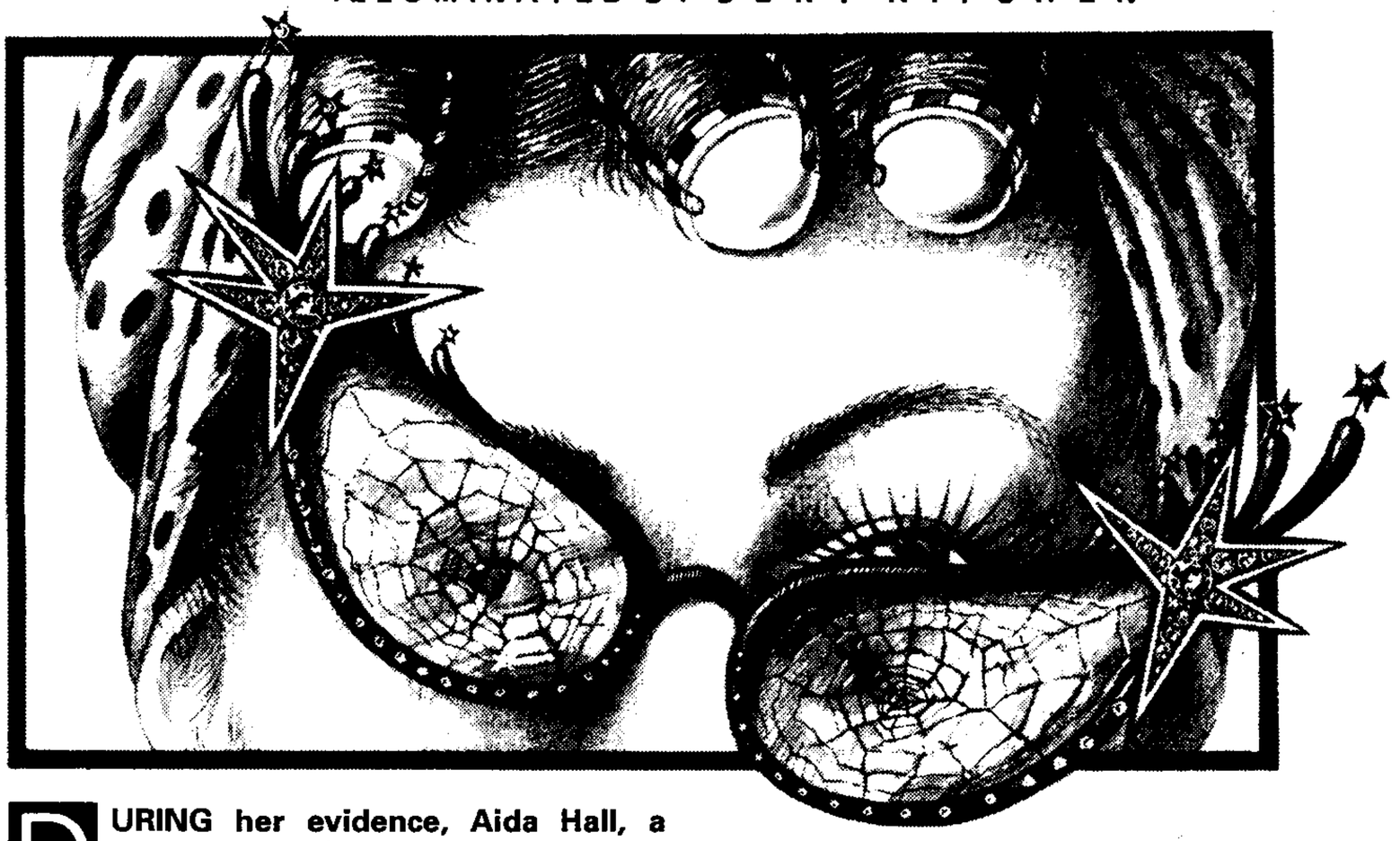
Wednesday

All the papers said that my speech was a great success. One even said I had been quite like Mr Churchill during the war, especially in the bit when I said: "If something nasty happened to Mr Saddam then I for one would be quite pleased — oh yes."

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE'S

TRUE STORIES

ILLUMINATED BY BERT KITCHEN



DURING her evidence, Aida Hall, a greengrocer from Horsham, said: "Christine and I were close for 20 years. She was such a lovely girl. She called me 'Mother'. But after she befriended Madge Witoski, snatched my two jumbo sausage rolls, and broke my £150 Edna Everage spectacles, I felt obliged to call her a pox-ridden whore who had slept with every man in Dorking."

Speaking in her own defence, Mrs Christine Bane did not deny she had threatened to plant a bomb in The Flower Basket — Aida Hall's shop — "but after the incident with the sausage rolls, she said that it was my fault that my son was run over and killed and that Dennis, her son-in-law, was going to come round and break all my boyfriend's bones. At this point I slapped her face and the police were called."

"The spectacles are my pride and joy," said Mrs Hall. "They have never been Superglued. My late husband bought them, and I always wear them when I visit the cemetery."

ASSURING his followers that, although he had lost his deposit, he was not discouraged, Aslam Khusra, the first eunuch to seek election in Pakistan, said:

"My policy was particularly popular with lawyers and journalists, and many of my votes came from them. But I shall return to the fight. Men and women have had their opportunity. Now it is our turn to save the poor."

ASKED to investigate a complaint against two of his officers, Chief Superintendent Peter Hale of the Sheffield police said:

"Two of my constables saw a man in a saloon car with a hosepipe in his mouth, the other end of which was attached to the exhaust. They rushed to his help, carried him to their Panda, and drove him to the Furnival Hospital, where, after two days, he made a full recovery and was discharged.

"On his way home he stormed into the West Bar station and demanded a full enquiry into how the officers had scratched the paintwork on his vehicle."

CHALLENGED by the welfare officer of Campbelltown Court, New South Wales, to admit that his name was Darryl Wayne Crook rather than Darryl Wayne Thief, the name under which he had been charged with arson, the accused (18) agreed that his name *was* Crook but that he had changed it to Thief because Crook gave people the wrong impression.

A SPOKESWOMAN for the National Museum of Wales In Cardiff has said that it was absolutely no reflection on the character or talents of Mr Michael Harvey, a lecturer in movement, that his role as one of the museum's guide, during which he acted out the parts of an ancient Welsh cave-dweller, a Masked Mystery Man, or an American tourist who thought he was in France, had been dropped after only two weekends.

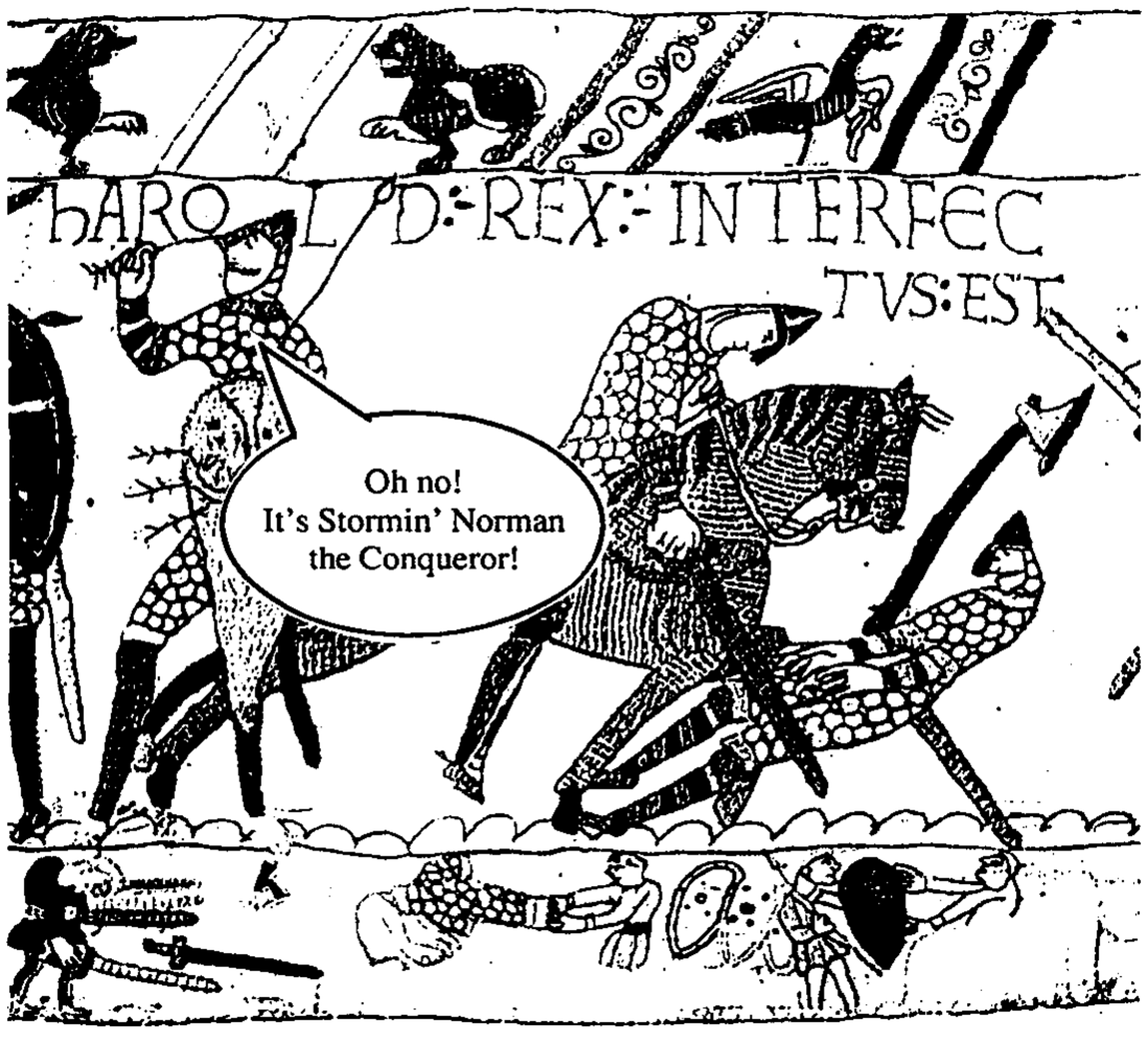
"Mr Harvey," she said, "has devised a new programme to suit the items on display at the National Folk Museum at St Fagans."

ABSENT from court, and known locally as "the worst British hooligan in Greece", Mr Bobbie Corkett was sentenced to a further 12 months imprisonment for assault after receiving 15 months for an assault in 1988, then returning home to replace the teeth he lost on that occasion, and, soon after relanding in Corfu, bashing Tom Taylor, his former combatant, on the head with a beach umbrella.

"He is absent from court," said his lawyer, "because an hour ago he got his head stuck through the bars of his cell while insulting the guards."

INFORMATION: Dorking Advertiser 4.10.90; Bengal Times 8.10.90; Sheffield Star 10.10.90; TNT Magazine 15.10.90; Times Higher Education Supplement 26.10.90; Corfu News, Dept 1990.

MONITORS: J. Hewitt, Jack Preger, R.A. Haley, M.J. Earl, Paul Cleves, Alastair Bishop.

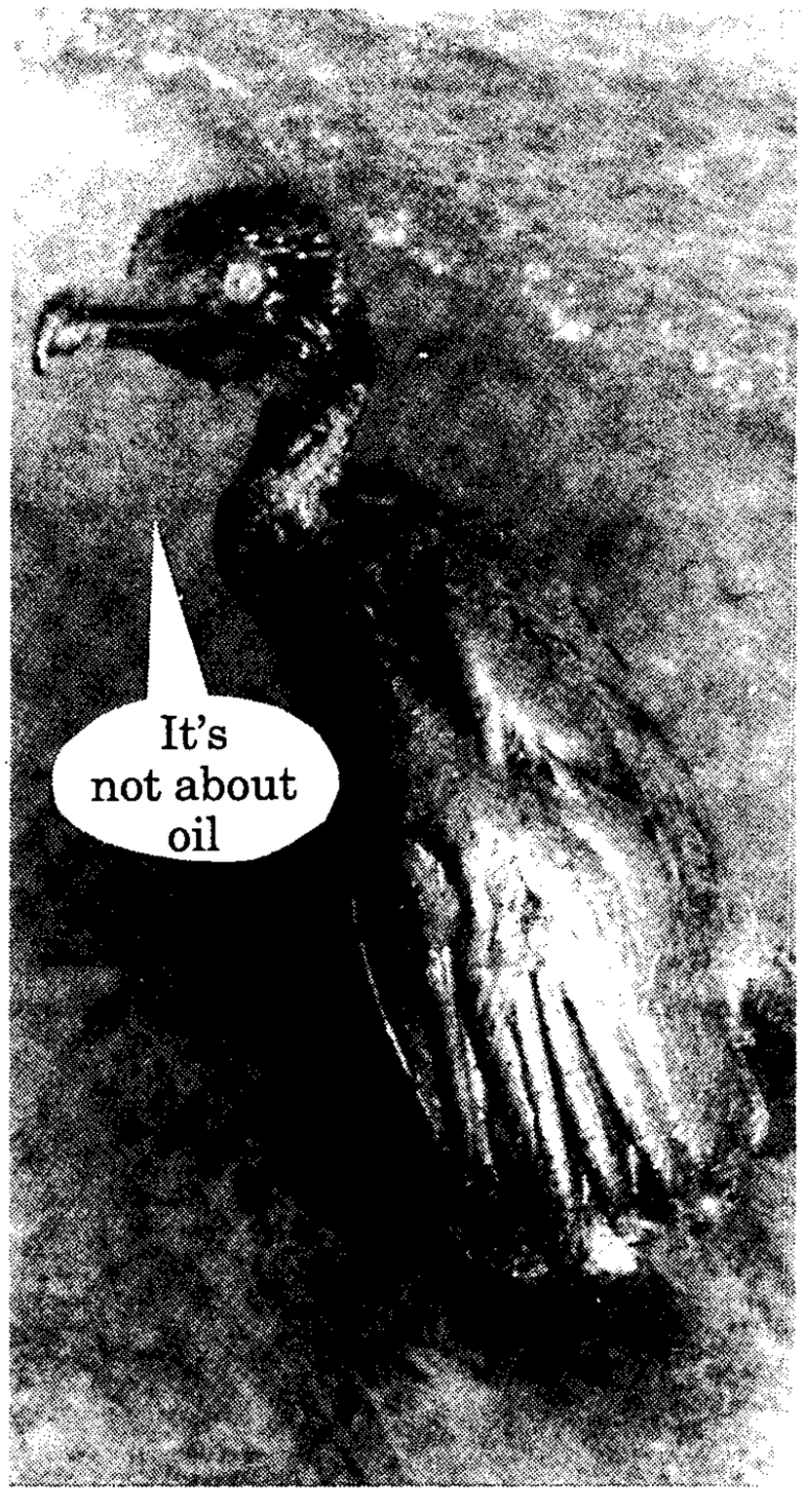


Yes, It's Harold Pinter Rhyming Slang!

Pause	**Applause**
Harold Pinter	**Likes a classy bint... er**
Homecoming	**Antonia's slumming**
Lady Antonia	**Phonier and phonier**
Cricket Blazer	**Lady Antonia Fraser**
	(You've done her — Ed)
June 30th Group	**Delightful watercress soup**
NW3	**Glass of sherry**
Vin de Table	**Margaret Drabble**
CBE	**Hates the bourgeoisie**
Birthday Party	**Hampstead arty**
Sidcup	**Washed up**
Dumb waiter	**Give me Alan Plater**

(That's enough slang — Ed)

THOSE ALLIED WAR AIMS IN FULL



1. Kick Saddam's ass (USA). Knock Saddam for six (UK).
2. Er...
3. That's it.

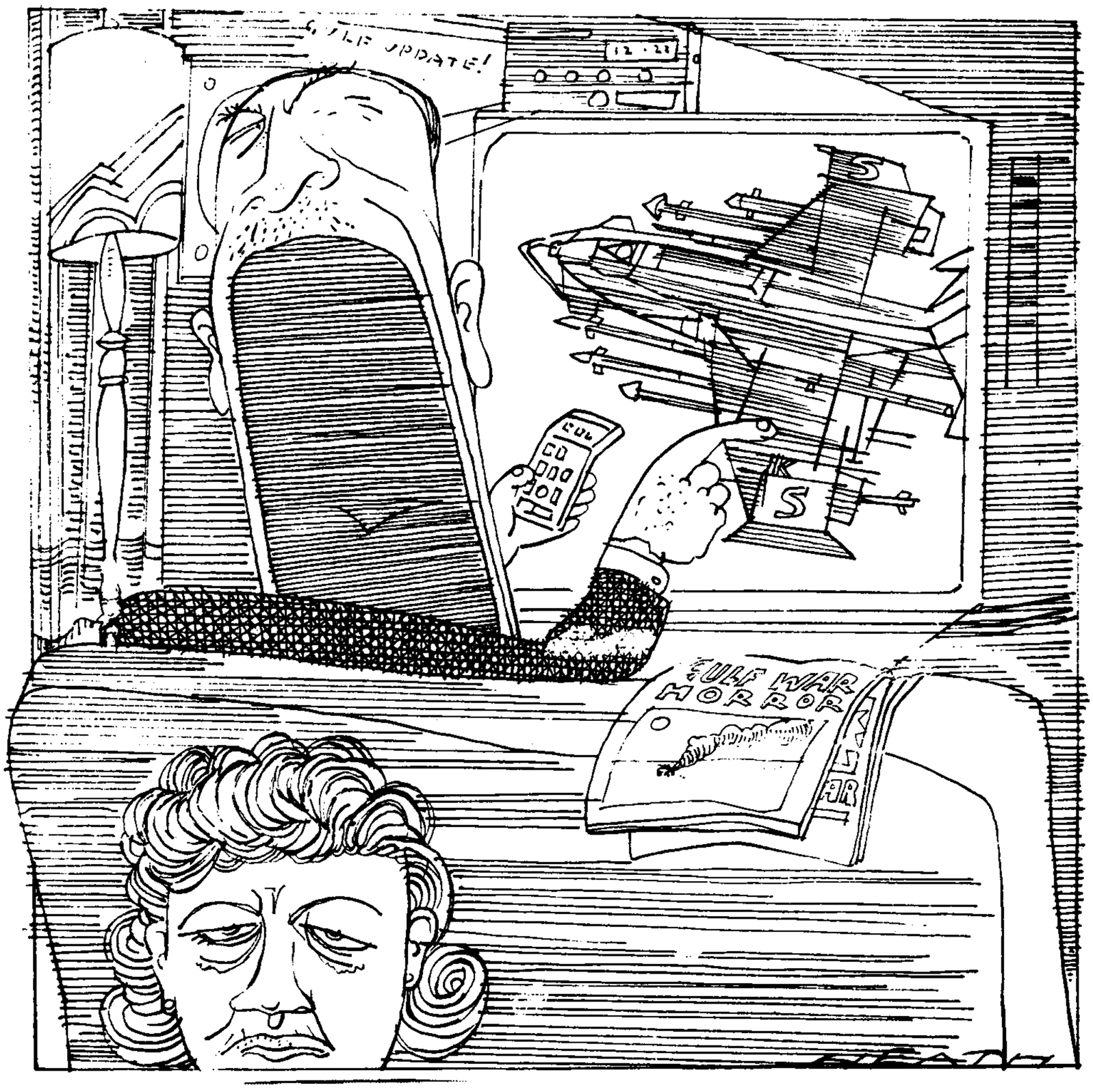
I've always said it. You can't trust the Germans. Once they're reunited it'll only be a matter of time before...

...they're all out on the streets shouting "No War!" and refusing to fight.

Er...

Great Bores Of Today.

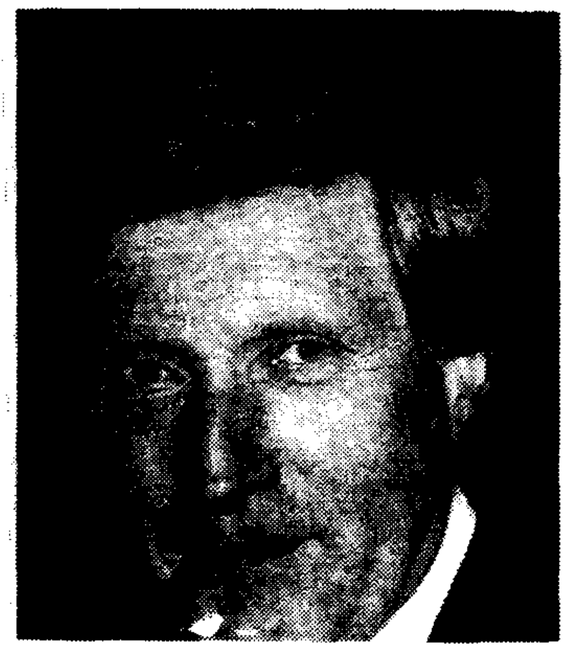
"... I mean they're doing it all wrong I was talking to a bloke who knew someone who had worked on the contract for one of the bunkers and he said they're immune to air attack so there are thousands of planes stacked up like in an underground car park just waiting for the ground forces to go in what they should have done first thing is send in the SAS to detonate the shelters and then let Mossad take out the nuclear capability so that when the air strikes start the Tornados can really soften up the elite tank regiments who apparently have laid two million mines in the desert and look at this oil slick I mean it's 30 miles long and could pollute the whole area I mean they're doing it all wrong I always said they should kill the oil refineries first then go for Saddam's communications and command network and by the way no one knows where he is he could be in Africa directing it all with today's technology they're doing it all wrong..."



GULF WAR DAY 4

Continuing our round-the-clock, extended, non-stop, continuous, ball-by-ball coverage of the Gulf War.

DAVID DIMBLEBORE: I'm sorry, I must stop you there, Admiral, because we're just getting in reports of a possible missile alert at Ahzid-Ahrain, which is in... er... eastern... er... General, do you have any comment on that?



GENERAL SIR HORACE GUSSETT: Well, I think we've got to be very cautious about this one. At the moment this report, if there is one, is unconfirmed. You'll remember we had a similar report yesterday that three AF-79s had been sighted further up the coast, and of course later in the day we got further reports which seemed to show that the earlier reports had been...

BRIAN REDHEAD: I'm sorry to interrupt you, General, but we're just going over live to Martin Bell, who is at a forward base somewhere in Saudi Arabia.

(Still picture of man in flak jacket talking on telephone)

KATE ADIE *(for it is she)*: Hullo, Brian. We're getting unconfirmed reports here that you've been getting reports of a possible missile attack on an as-yet-unidentified military target somewhere in the Middle East.

BRIAN: What is the mood there, Kate, wherever it is you are?

BRIAN BARRON: Well, you have to remember that it's three o-clock in the morning out here, so the mood is pretty quiet, due to the fact that everyone is asleep. Of course I cannot say too much, and I cannot reveal exactly where I am, but I can tell you that if a missile were to land anywhere near here we'd certainly know about it.

JEREMY PAXMAN *(in studio)*: Admiral, I come to you first. You were listening to that. What do you think we can really say about the mood here in the studio?

ADMIRAL SIR RODERICK GUSSETT: Well, of course, the first thing we have to remember is the weather. At this time of the year there's a lot of it about, particularly in that part of the world. This makes forward operations very difficult, which may be why we are getting these reports.

PETER SNOW: I must stop you there, because I just want to show a video of the type of missile we believe may have been responsible for this attack, if one has taken place.

(Cut to out-of-focus film of rocket being fired into the sky. Caption reads "MANUFACTURER'S VIDEO")

SNOW: The great point about the PF-34 Scorcher missile is that it has a range of 2,000 miles, and can only be brought down by the new American Asskicker anti-missile missile, which has not yet been invented.

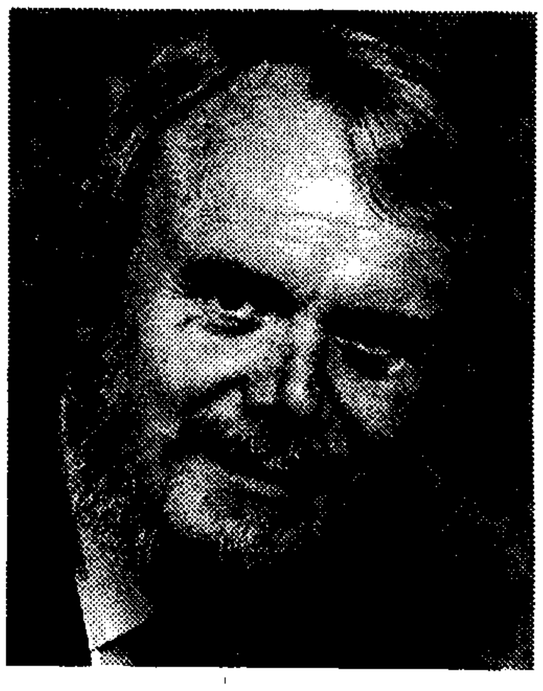
DIMBLEBORE: Thank you Peter, but I must interrupt you because we're going over live to a replay of the press conference given earlier today by Marlon Rotweiler of the Pentagon.

ROTWEILER: Good day, gentlemen. I have to announce that we have this morning received reports, as yet un-confirmed, of an Iraqi missile attack on military targets in the area of Ahzid-Ahrain. We are unable to give you any further information at this time. Yes, Jim?

REPORTER: Jim Pipesucker, *Idaho Chronicle*. Can you tell us the exact time planned for the launch of the allied attack on Kuwait?

ROTWEILER: I'm sorry, Jim, but at this moment in time that information is classified.

NAUGHTIE *(in studio)*: Paddy Ashdown, you've been listening to that briefing in Washington.



How do you think it is going to affect the mood in the House of Commons? Can the cross-party consensus be held, do you think? After all, it is four days since the vote when, as you know, there were 23 Labour abstentions.

ASHDOWN: Well, let me say as a former commando...

NAUGHTIE: Sorry, I'm going to have to cut you short there, because we are going over live to Tel Aviv and our reporter Julian O'Halloran. Julian, what are the Israeli papers saying this morning about these latest reports of a possible missile attack on

Ahzid-Ahrain? Is the Israeli policy of restraint still holding?

O'HALLORAN: The mood here is sombre. Of course, if these attacks had taken place on Israel, then I need hardly say that the mood would have been even more sombre. Hold on, I think something is just coming through on the television.

(Crackly pause while O'Halloran asks colleague what is on the television)

O'HALLORAN: Well, it seems that a senior Defence Ministry spokesman here, General Moishe Golan, has just refused to comment on the possibility of any direct Israeli response to the reports of the missile attack on Ahzid-Ahrain.

FRANCINE STOCK: Thank you, Julian. We'll be back to you later, but before we can confirm those reports about the latest possible missile attack let's just have one more look at the film of the laser-bomb attack on the Baghdad defence ministry which we've all enjoyed so much.

(Blurred black and white film, somewhat worn from endless replaying on all channels, showing square building falling apart. American voice-over: "Holy cow, it works!")

PAXMAN: It's time now for my nightly sparring match with the man we all love to hate, Mr Alfalfa Ahmed Fawsis, the Iraqi ambassador in Paris. Mr Towelhead, what lies have you got for us tonight?

SHIFTY-LOOKING MAN WITH MOUSTACHE: We're going to murder your prisoners of war. What do you say to that, English dog?

PAXMAN: You bastard. Thank you, Ambassador. And now we're going over live to the House of Commons to hear the concluding stages of this afternoon's debate on the Gulf.

ELDERLY MAN IN GLASSES *(reading from paper)*: ...and can my Right Honourable Friend now make a full statement on the shocking reports which have been carried on the BBC today, about a possible missile attack on the town of Ahzid-Ahrain, where it may well be that there are a great many defenceless women and children and a large number of British expatriates. Can my Right Honourable Friend assure me that, if these reports are in due course confirmed, the response of the allies will be swift, firm and, above all, swift?

DOUGLAS HOGG: May I say at once that the Government takes these reports very seriously indeed...

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear, z-z-z-z-z...

HOGG: ...and I can give a firm and unequivocal assurance that, if these reports turn out to be confirmed...

NICHOLAS WITCHELL: Well, we have to leave the debate there, because it's time for un update on those unconfirmed reports about a major missile attack on

Ahzid-Ahrain. But first, what kind of impact is this war having on the taxi-drivers of London as they ferry a mighty army of retired admirals, generals and air marshals round the various radio and television studios?

POLLY TOYNBEE *(standing in street with rain falling)*: Every day, literally hundreds of retired senior officers are being summoned to London from all over the West Country to appear on Gulf Special radio and television programmes. Naturally this is putting an almost intolerable strain on London's already hard-pressed taxi service. With me is Mr Russell Twisk, editor of *Cabs & Cabmen*.

TWISK: On behalf of my members, I would like...

(Cut back to studio)

DIMBLEBORE: I'm sorry to cut you short there, Polly. I'm sure we'll have time to come back to you later, but we're now going over live to the Gulf where there are unconfirmed reports that General Norman Schwarzkopf may be about to give a press conference.

(Cut to still picture of Bob Simpson and John Simpson watching TV screen in hotel in Amman)

JOHN AND BOB: Hullo, David, yes, we can confirm that General Schwarzkopf's press conference is being broadcast by CNN at this moment.

ALASTAIR STEWART *(in front of palm tree in Saudi Arabia)*: Can I just break in there to say that I've just had a call from ITN's Mike Nicholson with the Royal Navy in the Gulf to say that he's watching CNN as well.

(Cut to CNN)

GEN. SCHWARZKOPF: Gentlemen, the war is going exactly according to plan in every particular. That is all I can report to you at this time.

REPORTER: Don Eagleburger, *New Dworkin Bee*. General, can you confirm reports of a rocket attack on the location of Ahzid-Ahrain?

SCHWARZKOPF: All I can say is that there has been no attack, and there is no such town.

DIMBLEBORE *(back in studio)*: Well, Air Vice-Marshal, we've heard that absolutely categorical denial from the Supreme Allied Commander of the reports we were picking up earlier about the missile attack. Where does that leave us?

AIR VICE-MARSHALL SIR HUMBERT GUSSETT: Well, we've filled up twelve hours...

DIMBLEBORE: I'm sorry, Air Vice-Marshal, I'll have to cut you off there, because we've got unconfirmed reports that we may be able to go back live to a taxi-driver for his assessment of the Gulf War so far.

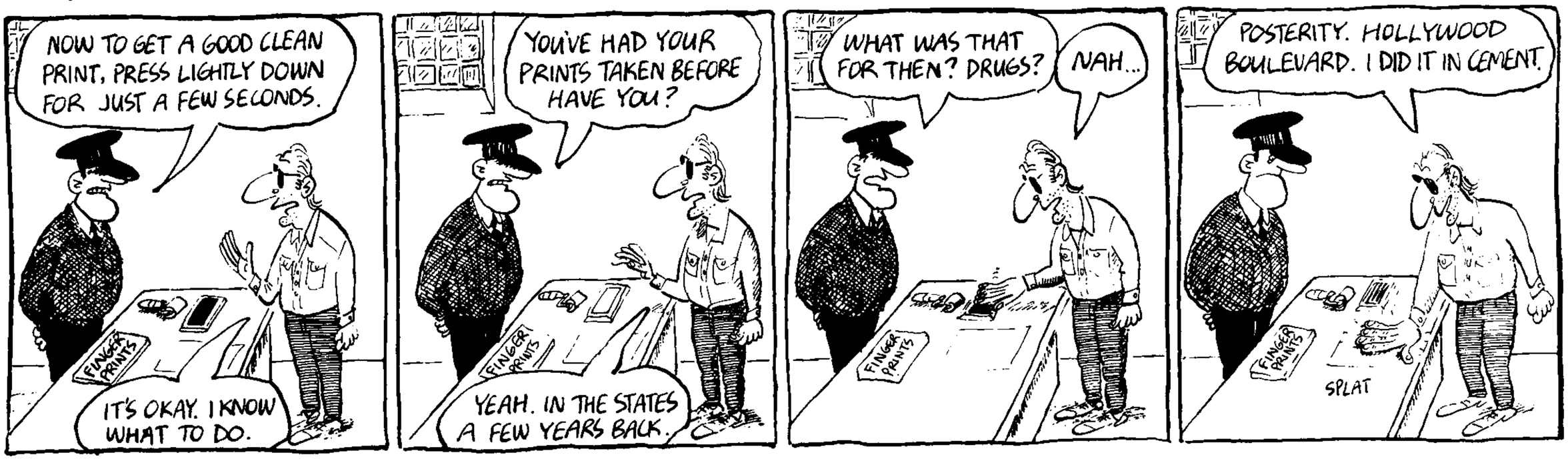
SID GUZZA *(cab no. 8842)*: ...that Saddam Hussein — know what I'd do with 'im? String 'im up. That's the only language people like 'im understand.

DIMBLEBORE: I've got to stop you there, because we're now going to show you all of this Gulf Special again...

(Continued all day and every day on all TV and radio channels)

Celeb

LIGGER


NOW TO GET A GOOD CLEAN PRINT, PRESS LIGHTLY DOWN FOR JUST A FEW SECONDS.
FINGER PRINTS
IT'S OKAY. I KNOW WHAT TO DO.
YOU'VE HAD YOUR PRINTS TAKEN BEFORE HAVE YOU?
FINGER PRINTS
YEAH. IN THE STATES A FEW YEARS BACK.
WHAT WAS THAT FOR THEN? DRUGS?
NAH...
FINGER PRINTS
POSTERITY. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD. I DID IT IN CEMENT.
FINGER PRINTS
SPLAT

TV TONIGHT

SOME FRIGHTFULLY AMUSING OLD FOLLIES

with Lady Lucinda Lampstand

(Wild-eyed upper-class woman seen wandering through Isle of Dogs)

LAMPSTAND *(for it is Her Ladyship)*: Who would have thought that the Isle of Dogs, of all places, gosh!, should contain one of the most extraordinary old wrecks in the country?

There is all this ghastly hi-tech nonsense *(shot of Canary Wharf-style buildings)*. Just look at it all, how absolutely frightful and too too hideous for words. It makes me want to throw up.

But then in the midst of this wasteland what should I find?

(Shot of white-haired old fraud in bowtie looking pleased with himself)

WORTHLESS: Good evening, Lady Lampshade. What fine embonpoint you have, to be sure.

LADY LAMBCHOP: Isn't he too too divine? Just look at his old-fashioned style, his Victorian views and, above all, this absolutely amazing waistcoat, hand-

embroidered I understand with pure silks from the factories of Sir William Deedes himself.

SIR LEGOVER: Your palazzo or mine?

LADY MUTTONDRESSED-ASLAMPTON: Oooh, you are awful — but I like you!

ENDS

An Apology

Gulf War

In common with all other newspapers, we may have inadvertently given the impression that the Gulf War had been won on the first day, and that allied air attacks had been 100 per cent successful in wiping out the whole of Iraq. Headlines such as SADDAM IS DEAD: WE'VE WON may have led some readers to conclude that hostilities were in some respects nearing their end.

We now accept that such reports were entirely without foundation, and we are happy to make it clear that it will in fact be very long and difficult, and that furthermore most of the Iraqi air force seems to be intact, as well as the entire army, most of the missile launchers, and President Saddam Hussein himself. We would like to apologise to our readers for any distress which may have been caused by our reports, which were based entirely on something we'd seen on the telly.

An Apology

President Gorbachev

In common with all other newspapers, we may from time to time over the past five years have given the impression that we believed Mr Gorbachev to be the saviour of his country, and an enlightened statesman who had led his country into a new era of freedom and democracy.

It has now been brought to our attention that these allegations were wholly baseless, and that Mr Gorbachev is, on the contrary, a ruthless, power-crazed dictator similar in every respect to the late V.I. Stalin, except worse.

How they are related

The Genealogical Trees of two of Britain's oldest and most respected families, shortly to be joined in Holy Acrimony *(shurely 'Matrimony'? W.D.)*

Baron Norbert d'Agneau "The Hammer of the Poor" = Lady Elfwina De'Ath

Sir Larold Lamb, First Baron of *The Sun* = Lady Samantha Fookes

Sir Bastard Slagheap, 1st Lord Lambton of Grimethorpe = Lady Laetitia Batty

Lord Tony Lambton of Legover = Lady Loopola Scatterbrain

Lady Lucinda Amnesia Euphoria Lambton

=

Ebenezer Kaffirbasher of Capetown = Mrs Koch-au-Vin

Ludwig Koch de Gooreynd = Petronella van der Telegraph

Monsieur Hercule Koch de Walloon (Later changed his name by deedpoll to Percival Tristram Churchill Wortshorne) = Lady Octavia Hill-Samuel-Montagu

Sir Peregrine Marmaduke Hotspur Spenser FitzCecil Wortshorne, 1st Knight Editor of Page 17 of the *Sunday Telegraph*

THE FIERY ORB

THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS OUR BOYS

Ascensiontide. The Year of Our Lord Eleven Hundred and Ninety Two

The Orb: First with ye illuminated manuscripts

Sod Off Saladin!

From the News Pool in the Holy Land
John, Son of Simp and Kate A.D.

THE coalition forces of Flemish, Frankish and English troops today continued their aerial bombardment of the city of Acre.

With the new hi-tec ground-to-air catapults they are confident that they can remove Saladin from the disputed territory without a prolonged crusade.

"Everything is going to plan," said the head of Allied Christendom Command, "Stormin' " Godfrey de Bouillon, "but it could take longer than expected, possibly up to seven centuries, to recapture the Holy Land."

"Our main worry," continued Godfrey in a lengthy briefing to learned clerkes, "is that Saladin may set fire to the oil and then use it as a chemical weapon to be poured against ground forces."

He ended by imposing restrictions on all chroniclers as he said the speed of media reporting was now such that detailed accounts of battles were reaching home within three years.

ON OTHER PAGES

Anti-Popes back war . . . . . Page 2
Madonna Special . . . . . Page 3
Is Paul of Gascogny mad? 10 tell-tale signs . . . . . Page 5
Competition: Kill a Saracen and win Christ's finger . . . . Page 7
Why oh why don't the Venetians stop whingeing and join in? by Paul, son of John . . . . . Page 8
Bad taste cartoon by Newman Page 9

THERE'S MORE FUN IN THE FIERY ORB

MPs praise Kaufman 'restraint'

by Our Political Staff
Old Tel Aviv

MPs on both sides of the House today paid warm tributes to the "remarkable restraint" shown by Mr Gerald Kaufman during the course of the Gulf War.

MPs agree that it would be "entirely natural" for Mr Kaufman to launch an all-out attack on the Tories, despite the fact that this would give him no strategic benefit.

In the past it has invariably been the Kaufman way to stamp, scream and become hysterical at any provocation offered by the Government.

Kaufmanabunga!

Commentators are, however, uncertain just how long the new policy of restraint will survive intact, before Kaufman "explodes in a terrific bate and loses Labour the next election".

"Lot one-one-three... 'Falling Art Prices'..."

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: War has broken out, and Charles is caught up in the tide of events...

"LOOK DIANA, we all have to make sacrifices, you know. I mean, there *is* a war on, after all." Charles watched as Diana stood moodily looking out of the window at the falling dusk.

"How could they do this?" she asked testily, her pretty mouth pouting in a sulky grimace.

Charles crossed his arms and tried to explain.

"It's war. You can't expect everything to carry on as normal. There are bound to be disruptions, even on the home front."

Outside a badger walked warily across the Highgrove lawn and sniffed suspiciously at a discarded croquet mallet, abandoned during more carefree sunlit hours.

Diana turned and faced Charles defiantly.

"I don't care. I don't see why *Top of the Pops* should be taken off just so you can watch your war on the telly."

Charles bristled as Diana continued. "You just sit there night and day glued to the set. I'm sick of it on all the time..."

She strode purposefully to where Charles was sitting in his Manfred Mann fin-de-siècle armchair (a gift from the Armand Hammer Museum of Money in Illinois).

"Look at that old general. Yak yak yakety-yak..."

"No, no," Charles remonstrated. "He's awfully knowledgeable. I met him once when I was inspecting his regiment in Amstrad in Germany. The 17th Queen's Own Paranormals. He's explaining the sort of ground plan thingie."

But Diana was not listening and she was in no mood for an argument.

"I for one have had enough of it. People want a change, a break. Even that awful programme that you and Dr Barkworth did would be better than this..."

"IT'S A THING that Dr Barkworth and I did. The ratings were awfully high..." "Who is it calling?" a young female BBC receptionist enquired impersonally.

"Er... my name is Prince Charles."

"From where?"

"Er... Highgrove in Gloucestershire. I haven't got the postcode, I'm afraid."

"No. What company?"

"I'm a prince..."

"Prince? You want *Top of the Pops*. I'll put you through."

"No, no. Diana wants *Top of the Pops*. I want Mr Botney of the sort of Arts & Architecture bit..."

There was a short silence followed by a piece of music, which Charles immediately recognised as the 17th-century Italian composer

Badalamenti with his overture *Il Twin Peaks*.

Finally there was a click, and the familiar voice of Mr Alan Botney, the suave impresario of the airwaves, came on his carphone. There was traffic noise in the background and it was difficult to hear Mr Botney clearly.

"Your Highness, what a pleasure. Some colleagues and I were just saying, funnily enough, what a great pleasure it was working with you and..."

"That's awfully kind," Charles interposed impatiently. "It's just that I was talking to Diana just now and she's a terrific fan of the hit parade thing you do, the *Top of the Jukebox*, and she really misses it. What I thought was..."

Botney jumped in hurriedly. "Yes, Sir. You're right, Sir. We've had a lot of calls on this one."

Charles continued: "So I thought that since you've had to take off all these programmes — you know, *Hallo, Hallo* and *The Blackadder*..."

Charles read out a list from the *Sunday Telegraph* of television programmes which has been described as "too sensitive for transmission".

"I thought," Charles went on trying to establish his point, "this might be just the time to give the viewers another chance to see my documentary about architecture. It was terrifically well received..."

There was the sound of a siren, and Mr Botney's voice became indistinct.

"What was that, Sir?"

"*It Really Is Appalling*." Charles repeated the title.

"You're right, Sir. I'll do something at once."

"HE SAID he'd do something at once." Charles and Diana were sitting at Highgrove once more in front of the Ishiguro 42-inch Videotronic Device. Charles was feeling pleased with himself. It was so rare for him to influence events so directly. Mr Botney had promised that the programme would appear that very night. How had his old friend and mentor Sir Laurens van der Post described that sensation of achievement? Wasn't it in Chapter 12 of his classic, *The Rocks That Speak*?

"Apples fall from a shaken tree, but trees do not fall from a shaken apple."

How very true that was, how very true.

Diana flicked through the channels with the remote control.

"So you're telling me it's on, are you?"

Charles nodded.

"Oh yes. Myself and Barkworth. It's just what the country needs. Particularly that bit where we're on the barge in the Thames and Dr Barkworth asks me what the tall building over there is. And I smile at him and say 'I don't know, but it Really Is Appalling'."

But what was this, appearing suddenly on the screen? A black man gyrating in pink trousers amidst a cloud of smoke. He didn't remember this bit. Was that Barkworth in the baseball cap and the gold medallion dangling from his chest?

A BBC Continuity voice announced: "And now due to popular demand, and a very special request indeed, it's... *Top of the Pops*!"

Diana squealed with delight and flung her arms around Charles.

"Chazza, you're brill!"

(To be continued)

THE SUN SAYS

BASTARD!

Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard!

Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard! Bastard! Bastard.

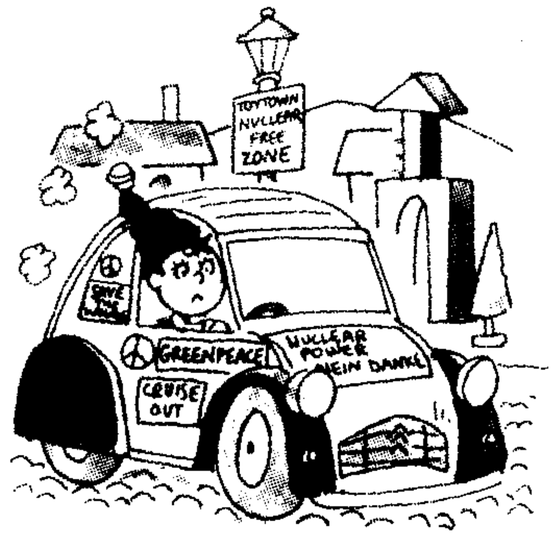
Bastard, bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard! Bastard! Bastard. Bastard, bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard! Bastard! Bastard!

Bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard! Bastard, bastard, bastard. Bastard, bastard,

ON OTHER PAGES: Bastard!

NODDY'S NEW LOOK

BY Enid Ryton



It was a lovely sunny day and Noddy climbed into his car. "Hello," he said. "This NUCLEAR POWER NEIN DANKE sticker wasn't here yesterday. How strange! I don't remember it being a Citroen Deux Chevaux either", he thought as he drove along the Old Bruce Kent Road into Toytown.

The first person he met was Mr Tubby Bear.

"Hello Mr Tubby Bear, you fascist bastard," he found himself saying. "How dare you wear fur? Take that!"

And little Noddy poured red paint all over Mr Tubby Bear.

"Gosh. I feel a bit different today," he thought as he turned the corner and was waved down by WPC Plod.

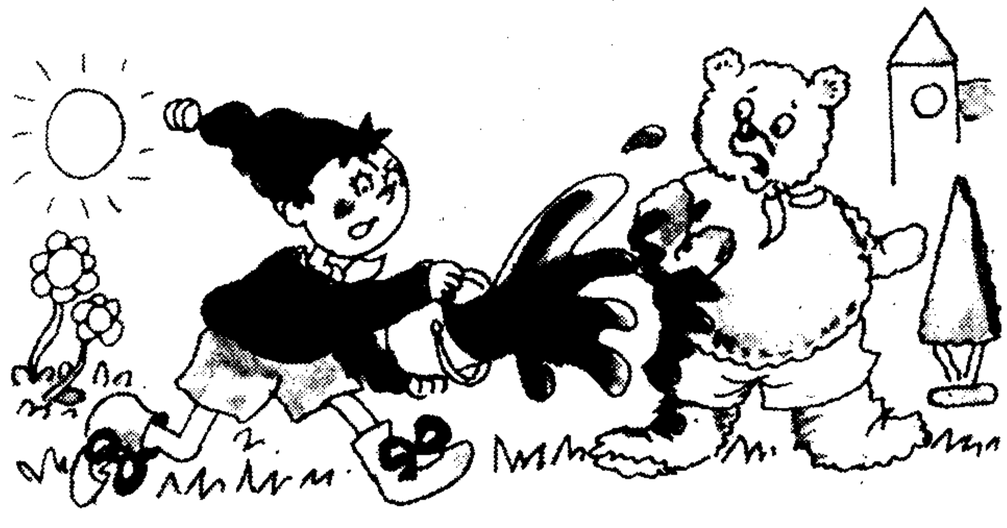
"Where's Policeman Plod?" he asked.

"He was sent down for racially harassing Golliwog," the woman policeperson told him.

"Golly!" Noddy exclaimed.

"Right. You're nicked as well."

Oh no! Everything seemed to have changed to poor Noddy.



"You have the right to one phone call," said WPC Plod.

"Alright," he said, unable to stop himself picking up the toy phone. "I'll phone Esther. Hello Esther? It's about Big Ears. He's a perv."

"Good little Noddy," said WPC Plod. "I'm letting you off with a caution."

So Noddy went on his way and who should he see next but Sailor Doll?

"Hello, Sailor," he said.

"That's it Noddy!" interrupted Sally Social Worker (née Skittle). "That's the last time *you* introduce gay stereotypes into this story."

"Oh dear, Noddy," said Mr Macpathetic, the Publisher. "I'm afraid you haven't been revised enough. We're going to have to re-

place you with someone more socially acceptable who reflects the country's changing cultural fabric in a multiplural society."

Chapter Two

Mohammed Al-Akbar Noddwallah left the mosque and cycled home for tea and hot toasted copies of *The Satanic* *(Continued Page 94)*

BBC drops Bruges film

by Our Media Staff
Jane Thynnestuff

THE much-loved wartime film classic *They Flew To Bruges*, scheduled for screening next Sunday afternoon at 2.30, has become an early casualty of the BBC's desire to suck up to the Government during the Gulf War.

The film, involving a World War II mission to Berlin which goes wrong, was ruled by BBC chiefs to be "too sensitive to be shown during a wartime situation".

It will be replaced by the uncut version of *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Also on the BBC banned list is the popular situation comedy series *The Good Life*. It is considered that the word "Life" might offend viewers at a time when so many people are losing theirs. It will be replaced by an old episode of Esther Rantzen's *That's Life*.

Scud 'n' Pete

A similar policy of wartime censorship has been adopted by BBC radio. More than 560 pop "singles" have been dropped from the "play list" for the duration of the war. These include:

- ***The Desert Song*** **by Mario Lanzen.**
- **Strauss's *Four Last Songs* by Stormin' Elizabeth Schwarzkopf.**
- ***Come Fly With Me*** **by Frank Sinatra.**
- ***Singin' In Bahrain*** **by Gene Kelly.**
- ***Down At The Old Bull And Bush*** **by Chas 'n' Dave.**
- ***Kiss Me Kate Adie*** **by Cole Porter.**
- ***Tomahawk*** **by The Shadows.**
- ***The Military Symphony*** **by Haydn.**
- ***When Iraqi Eyes Are Smiling*** **by Des O'Connor.**

Turd World War

Worst hit of all the BBC ban are records made by the Turds, the former popular singing group, all of which have been banned for their association with the Peace Movement.

Songs now outlawed by the BBC include:

- ***Love Is The Thing, Hate Isn't.***
- ***Hey Mr Satsuma Out There In Space.***
- ***We All Live In A Jar Of Marmalade.***
- ***Rule Britannia.*** *(Shurely shome mishtake? W.D.)*

Mr Spiggy Topes was unavailable for comment last night, owing to his early death some years back — but his widow, Mrs Yoko Onassis, is leading a Peace Shopping Trip to Macy's with some of Mr Topes's former money, in protest against the Gulf War.

SUPERBOWL '91 with Old Gridiron

Dear Old Grid:

Can you help? My son Darren and his friend Darren have been arguing about the infamous incident in the 1983 East Territory Preliminary Playoffs between the Iowa Icebreakers and the Montana Moonshiners when the Yellowskins' legendary defensive short force kickliner Moses Q. Rainforest (the 19-stone former Newfoundland Elks' offensive smooth runner) bagged nine yards from Sam "Juggernaut" Barenboim, the Redneckers' inside digout.

Darren says Rainforest played a backcheck to Big Bill Beckstein which put the Yellowskins' half-forward armplugger in a two-yard box without a three-quarter defensive flyer.

Darren, on the other hand, reckons that the Redneckers were already in the second period of the three time call-off and therefore their uplauncher Richard "The Mouth" Littlejohn was still on a twenty-yard half-track between the Yellowskins' basedown and their own 48-yard stealer.

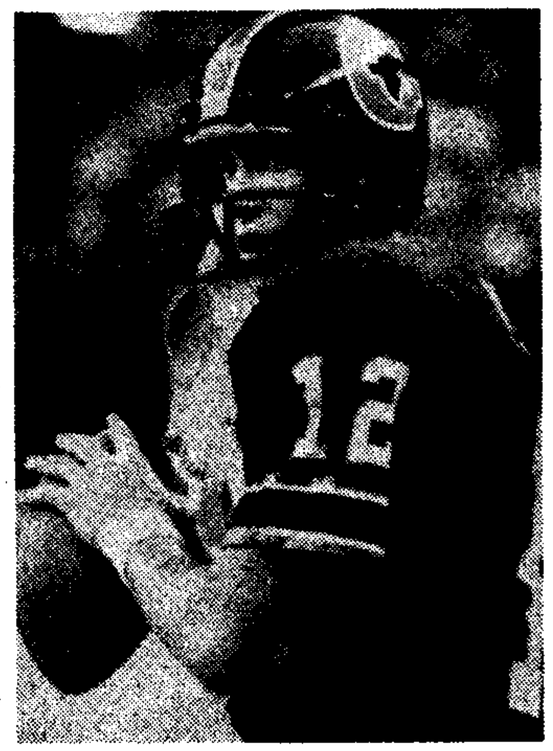
I, however, remember it slightly differently. My recollection is that no Rednecker had received a yardage penalty in either half.

Yours,
Darren Gatwick,
135 Catford Road,
Lewisham.

Old Grid writes:

Hats off to Darren! That boy of yours sure knows the difference between a cotton-picking muskrat and a wagon-load of Tennessee grits! I remember that game as if it was yesterday, which indeed it was when I watched it on OLD GRID'S CLASSIC SUPERBOWL VIDEOS *(brought to you at the highly competitive price of $99.99, or £999.99 sterling).*

*Send now for the free "*GRIDVID*" catalogue and relive those magic moments in the comfort of your own armchair, which is where you saw it the last time.*



Home Shooter?

Dear Old Grid,

My brother Darren and I always watch you on Channel 4's *Gridiron Special* on Sunday nights (sponsored by Schwarzkopf Lite Lager), and we saw you last week going through some technical moves on the blackboard.

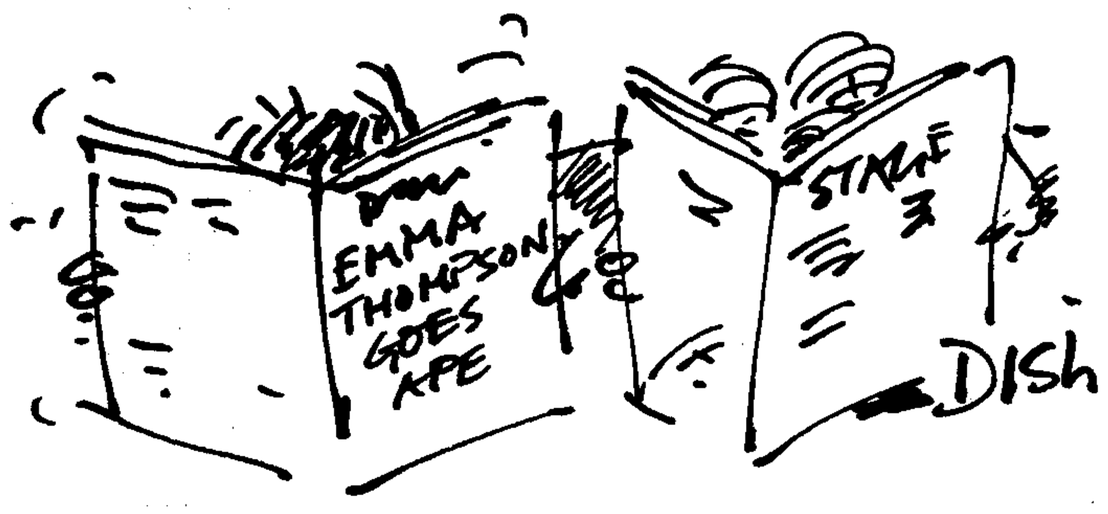
There was one move which particularly puzzled us. It was towards the end, after you had spent twenty minutes explaining the classic Milwaukee Muggers' breakout in the second quarter of the 1937 NFC Roadbowl series. You suddenly slumped forward and seemed to fall into a deep sleep, along with my sister's husband, Darren, and everybody else who was watching the programme.

Can you put us in the picture?

Yours,
Darren Luton,
134 Catford Road,
Lewisham.

Old Gridron writes:

Z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z...



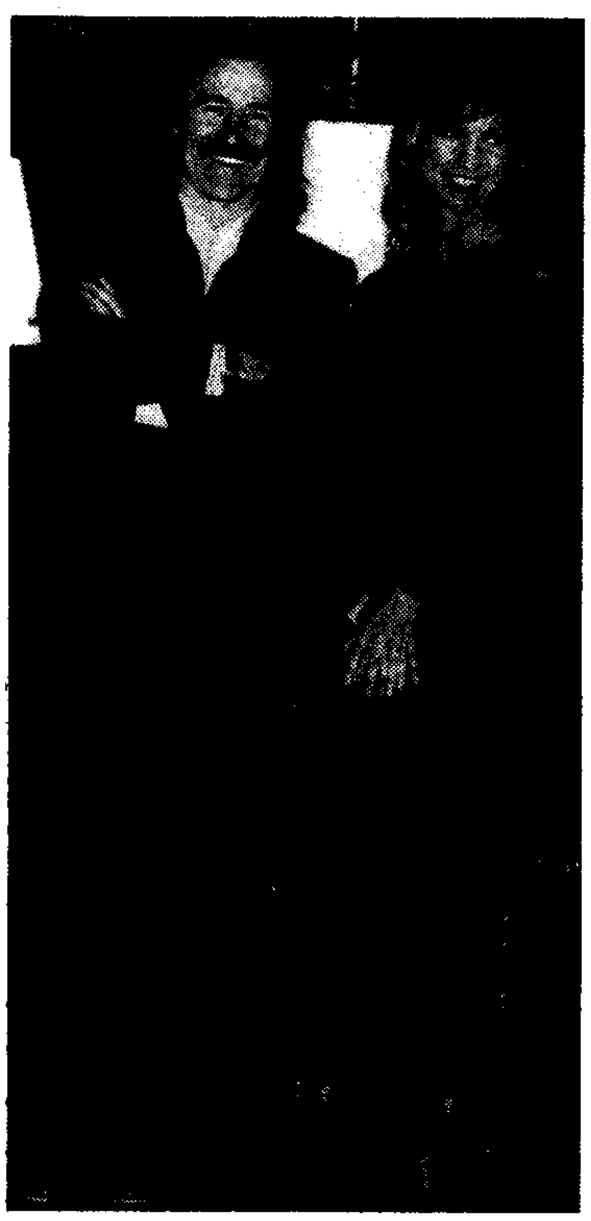
"I think you ought to remember, Em... that I WAS *Henry V..."*

Continuing the hugely popular Sunday Colour Supplement feature you can read exclusively in every paper...

IPFRONTIERS

Here's a pair of Star Gazzers! Don't cry, Paul, Anne's a real Diamond and she's not going to send you off! Go on, you Brut, and show her your Spurs!

Who's Diana Rigged up for this evening? She's remembered to order her Pinter, even if it's only Harold! But which one's the Caretaker?



Sue's found a new Desert Island Dish! And Miss Lawley won't Chuck Heston in a hurry! No time for a favourite book, though, with Charlton Athletic! His place or Ben Her's?

It's the Hall of Fame! Champagne for Sir Peter, but Sting gets stung for the bill! Everything's going Pop!

Who's driving Nigel Mansell crazy? It's Felicity Kendall, of course, and he's lapping it up! Talk about the Good Life! Keep your eyes on the road, Nige!

Madonna's mad on a new man! It's none other than TV's Charles Moore, deputy editor of the *Daily Telegraph*! Looks like you're a big hit, Charlie, and the Moore the merrier!

Sarah Brightman is feeling a little *horse*! No wonder her singing's suffering! At least she's not saddled with Andrew Lloyd Webber nowadays! That's the Hot Gossip, anyway!

(That's enough piss-poor captions to dreary PR photos by clapped-out hacks — Ed.)

DIARY

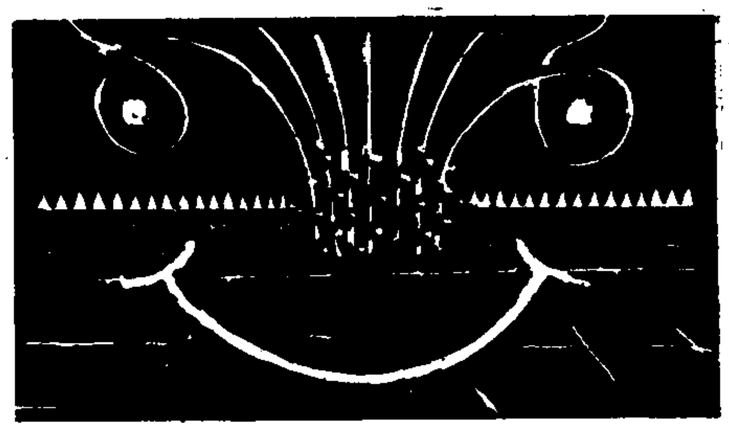
Hundreds upon hundreds of my more intelligent friends have been contacting me over the last *semaine* to implore me not to *ecriver* this Diary for such a magazine *plus scandale* as Private *Oeil*.

"You are widely considered the greatest English novelist of the century," a great many of them told me. "You will be remembered down the centuries for your brilliant novels *Glittering Prizes* (1968) and also of course for many others including, erm, well, the TV adaption of *Glittering Prizes* (1968). So don't lower yourself, dearest Freddy, by appearing in the *Eye*."

What was it that Wittgenstein remarked to Evelyn Waugh upon being introduced to Kenny Tynan by G.E. Moore? I forget, but, whatever it was, I may well have been tempted to use it myself. If a magazine or *journal* wishes to reap the benefit of one's razor-sharp *apercus*, then one could be churlish to deny them their penn'orth. As no lesser man than I (Socrates) remarked to the mythical Agamemnon one day: "The brightest jewels are to be found in the darkest caves." Touché, *mes braves*!

Not long ago, I was offered the post of Chairman of the Booker Prize committee. Am I *tout seul* in my deploration of the dreadful writing that is paraded as *beaux lettres* in this country (though my strictures do not apply to France, where I have a delightful house or *villa* in the *Perigord*)? Future biographers (Lord, save me from the flood of future biographers) who will doubtless foregather to peruse my collected notebooks must expect little mercy for my acclaimed contemporaries, though they will, I suspect, learn a great deal about the spiritual and intellectual journey, often hazardous, always rewarding, embarked upon by the creator of, among other works of fiction, *The Glittering Prizes* (1968). Note, if you will the *panache*, the subtle use of pun and alliteration, and the *angst*, all coming together in the following passage:

April 15th 1983: *Today I create a new character. He is a brilliantly brilliant* public-school novelist who suffers from sniping and indifference** not through any personal defects of his own (he has none, save his dazzling dazzlement*) but solely through anti-semitism. He will be the central figure in my new novel, a radical departure provisionally titled The Prizes Glittering. At*



FREDERIC RAPHAEL

*Cambridge, which emerges as rather more than a "Bridge" on the "Cam"***, he meets a variety of other characters, among them a brilliant novelist of roughly his own age and background who suffers** from sniping owing to anti-semitism.*

Key:

* alliteration

** angst

*** pun

Not long ago, I was offered the post of Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard, but I preferred to refuse, keeping quiet about it so as not to embarrass *"le pauvre choix seconde"*. Is anyone other than I knowing anything about language and for what it's uses are any more? I doubt it. Yet a sense of place — *le sense du place* — cannot be understood by a novelist without a sense of language. I am currently writing — from my villa in the *Perigord* — a BBC/TV drama series set in pre-war Berlin, *Das Klitteren Prizzenstz*. In this scene, the young writer Frederik seems to sum up the knife-edge reality of 20th century society as he speaks of his love for the young writer Freda. Note, *chers maitres*, the almost tangible tense of place:

From *Das Klitterund Pritzenstz* by Frederic Raphael. A BBC/TV production:

(Scene 111: Berlin Railway Station. Frederik and Freda stand in front of a sign which says in thick Germanic script, "BERLIN RAILWAY STATION". Close-up of Frederik as he looks into Freda's eyes. Freda has her back towards the camera but we know that it is her as she has a sign saying "FREDA" hanging from her back.)

Frederik *(unsure of himself)*: Well, *achtung Spitfeur*, here we are...

Freda *(more sure of herself)*: ...in Berlin.

Frederik *(with growing confidence)*: ...pre-war, *mein Gott*.

Freda *(faltering slightly)*: I've always *Donner und Blitzen* loved pre-war Berlin, you know.

Frederik *(now in complete control)*: ...so much more, I don't know... *Berlinish* than post-war Berlin.

Freda *(as if overcome with the force of historical destiny)*: Oh, Frederik! You're so much more *intelligent* than the others!

Frederik *(forcefully)*: Oh, Freda! *Achtung! Achtung!* I am! I am! I am!

Et maintenant, mes chers, a modest literary quiz of the it's-on-the-tip-of-my-*langue* variety: which major living English novelist has never won the Nobel Prize for Literature? You wanna clue (as a brash American producer who wished to give me a great deal of money to script a blockbuster movie once said to me)? Here's a couple of clues, then: 1) Not long ago, he was offered the job of Cultural Ambassador to the United Nations 2) He is widely recognised as a supremely wry and intelligent novelist, for among other works, *The Glittering Prizes* (1968). An easy one? perhaps; but open goals can be missed. If I might just add a revealing *post scriptum*: the artist in question was secretly offered the Nobel Prize some time ago at his *villa* in *Perigord*, but declined on the grounds of modesty.

A beautiful Spring morning of the sun-out-no-rain-not-too-windy variety. I decide to Go For a Walk. While communing with nature — can I be alone in reminding myself of the Young Wordsworth? — I toy with the experience, as all the finest novelists must. Like Coleridge, I take copious notes, brief, vivid, and, from a man the world knows as a fierce wit and wry genius, quite extraordinarily tender:

Spring! And the grass seems to sing my name! The trees echo with the feint shimmer of "Raphael! Raphael!" as they bend their trunks towards me as I pass. The birds — feathers-wings-beaks — peep out of their nests in supplication and veneration! This morning, it is as if the very heavens had opened up, all to hail the author of... The Glittering Prizes (1968).

Delicious, surely?

"She lives in a three-storey terrace house with an outside toilet, her only heating is a coal fire and the house is regularly stoned by youths," he said.

Councillor Newton also revealed that an old woman who suffers from blackouts is living and should not be.

East Belfast local newspaper

Earlier this week, the SA Police Public Relations Division in Pretoria said police were being blamed daily for their impartiality. "These allegations have been repeatedly and thoroughly investigated and to date absolutely no proof has been found.

The Weekly Mail, S.Africa

"Run for it – larger louts!"

Literary Review

Prose and cons

Granta 34

THERE IS no doubt that *Granta* has published exciting writing over the years. Unfortunately the years were 1983 and 1984, when editor Bill Buford coined the term "dirty realism" and produced a series of issues containing the good and the unexpected: from Milan Kundera (in the days when literary editors thought he was an Italian football team) to the Rolling Stones.

Buford used to find new writers. Today he jumps on whatever literary bandwagon is passing. Simon Schama wins a prize? Why, let's commission him to do something for *Granta*. Allan Gurganus being hyped? Commission him. *Granta* claims to be "A Paperback Magazine of New Writing", but "new" in the sense of "we've seen it all before". *Granta* 34 does for new writing what *Rambo 94* would do for the art of cinema. There's as much chance of finding a new writer in *Granta* these days as of finding a Pogues' song on a Pavarotti album. (A few more literary lunches and the bearded Buford will soon bear a startling resemblance to the Nessun Dormobile.)

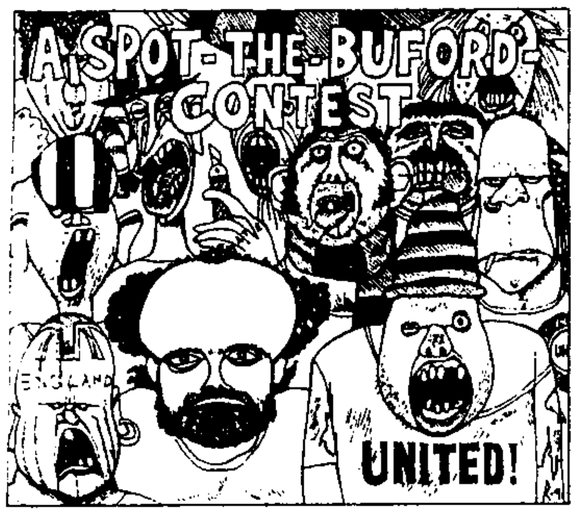
For all his faults as an editor (and Buford has many, as anyone who has ever heard his lunchtime "Oh damn, I've left my wallet at the office" story will testify), the thinking man's Snipcock could produce an adventurous and readable magazine. But these days he's more concerned with expanding his publishing empire, and the magazine's content has suffered. For at least a couple of years it's been possible to predict *Granta*'s contents quite easily. Each one is guaranteed to contain (and the latest is no exception):

One concerned piece about eastern Europe/Russia: This time it's the Russia/Afghanistan question; last time it was Roumania; in 32 it was Moravia; in 31 it was Bucharest and Timisoara; while *Granta* 30 went all the way and devoted an entire issue to ramblings on "New Europe", just like every other publication in the land. Buford used to set trends, now he's about as trend-setting as the *Telegraph Magazine*. He'll be doing a Gulf war issue next. Or maybe a royal family one.

Several pages of self-promotion: Buford used to allow other publishers the privilege of advertising their wares in *Granta*, but now it seems that he no longer needs the money so he can shut them out and advertise Granta Books instead. The current issue has five pages of self-promotion, including both inside covers. Last time it was six pages, and check out the all-important inside covers of issues 32, 31, 30, 29, 28…

Several pieces by "new" writers who have appeared in *Granta* too often before: Out of 12 pieces in the current issue, eight are by old *Granta* hands.

One piece by Martin Amis, Julian Barnes or Jonathan Raban: See issues 34, 33, 32, 31, 30 and 29. Issue 28 was a self-indulgent birthday special so merely had something by *everyone* who's ever written for the magazine before.



Several pieces by people writing books for Granta Books: Strangely this doesn't include Buford himself, who has allegedly been writing a book on football hooliganism for almost a decade. Maybe these days he finds the Groucho Club more amenable than sharing a stadium with a load of drunken illiterate yobs (he can get that every year at the Frankfurt Book Fair, anyway). In this issue it includes an extract from Simon Schama's book, "published by Granta Books next spring", and a piece by Amitav Ghosh, who will be "published by Granta Books in the autumn". Why not just condense the books like *Reader's Digest* and have done with it?

At least one dead body: In *Granta* 34 it's Soweto in the concerned photo-journalist's flashlight, with the dead body laid out on page 254. It's not as if the photos are well reproduced, though given the subject matter perhaps we should be grateful for all the grain we can get. Last time it was Bolivia (dead child, page 180), with harrowing photos of Roumanian orphans for good measure. In 32 we got off lightly: the Czech bodies lying down were merely dead drunk. Issue 31? A cheerful set of photos of Bucharest funerals, not intruding on private grief in the least. Issue 30? "The Death of Merab Kostava". Issue 27 was actually called "Death", and centred round a gruesome set of photos of people dead or dying in hospital casualty wards, with another dozen dead faces at the back for those who hadn't yet thrown up.

Quite what this says about the psychological state of the editorial team is uncertain, though it may reflect subconscious concerns with the increasingly likely death of *Granta*, unless someone operates soon.

Books & Bookmen

■ *A FURIOUS row has broken out between two freelancers who both write for the Indescribablyboring on Middle Eastern matters, Alan George and Adel Darwish.*

George claims that Darwish's book Unholy Babylon: The Secrets of Saddam's War, published last week by Gollancz, relies heavily — and without attribution — on other people's published work.

The most flagrant plagiarism is the chapter on the history of Iraq from 1918 to the present day, which is lifted verbatim from Republic of Fear by Samir al-Khalil, published by Hutchinson Radius two years ago. Following a complaint from Radius, Gollancz has said that an "error" was made and has agreed to pay permission fees.

But Darwish and his publishers have yet to admit that several parts of the book dealing with Iraq's quest for nuclear weapons are pinched — with hardly any attempt at disguise — from articles by Alan George in Middle East magazine during the past two years.

Cheekier still is the Gollancz publicity bumf, which claims that Darwish "an Egyptian-born investigative journalist" is the man who "brought to light" the transcript of last year's famous meeting between the US ambassador in Baghdad, April Glaspie, and Saddam Hussein.

The truth is that the transcript was "brought to light" by ABC Television: its London office obtained the transcript in Arabic and contacted a translation agency, who in turn sent Darwish along. A couple of days after ABC broadcast its story, Darwish did a re-hash in the Indie.

Following a complaint from ABC, Gollancz now says its PR hype about Darwish is based on a "misunderstanding".

□ W.H. SMUG has settled with three out of the four publishing groups which had refused to supply it with books as a result of the retailer's insistence on being granted 90 days' credit.

Its shops were beginning to look even more denuded of books than usual. But in return for receiving books again from Random Century, Octopus and the BBC, Smug has agreed to pay its bills in 60 days. The three publishers will continue to grant 45 percent discount of the net price on all hardbacks and 55 percent on paperbacks. The only concession the publishers have made is, occasionally, to contribute to Smug's marketing budgets for bestsellers published by them — but even that, in most cases, may fall by the wayside.

■ *MEPHISTOPHELEAN literary agent Ed Victor was recently profiled by The Sunday Times in its "My Style" column. But no sooner had the interview been completed and the hack ferried back to Wapping than Victor rang him up and insisted the piece would have to be pulled. When asked why, Victor explained: "I am an American Jew and as such I'm a prime target for Iraqi terrorists…"*

□ ANOTHER literary agent, the flowery Giles Gordon of Anthony Sheil and Partners, has undergone a mysterious change of heart recently.

He has been doing the round of book launches telling anyone who'll listen what an extraordinarily nice, decent and intelligent lady is Sonia Land, the half-Chinese harridan who until recently was chief executive of Collins.

Where Gordon was once bilious at the mere mention of Land's name, he is now all butter and oil. This may have something to do with the fact that as the new majority shareholder of Anthony Sheil and Partners, Land is responsible for signing Gordon's expenses.

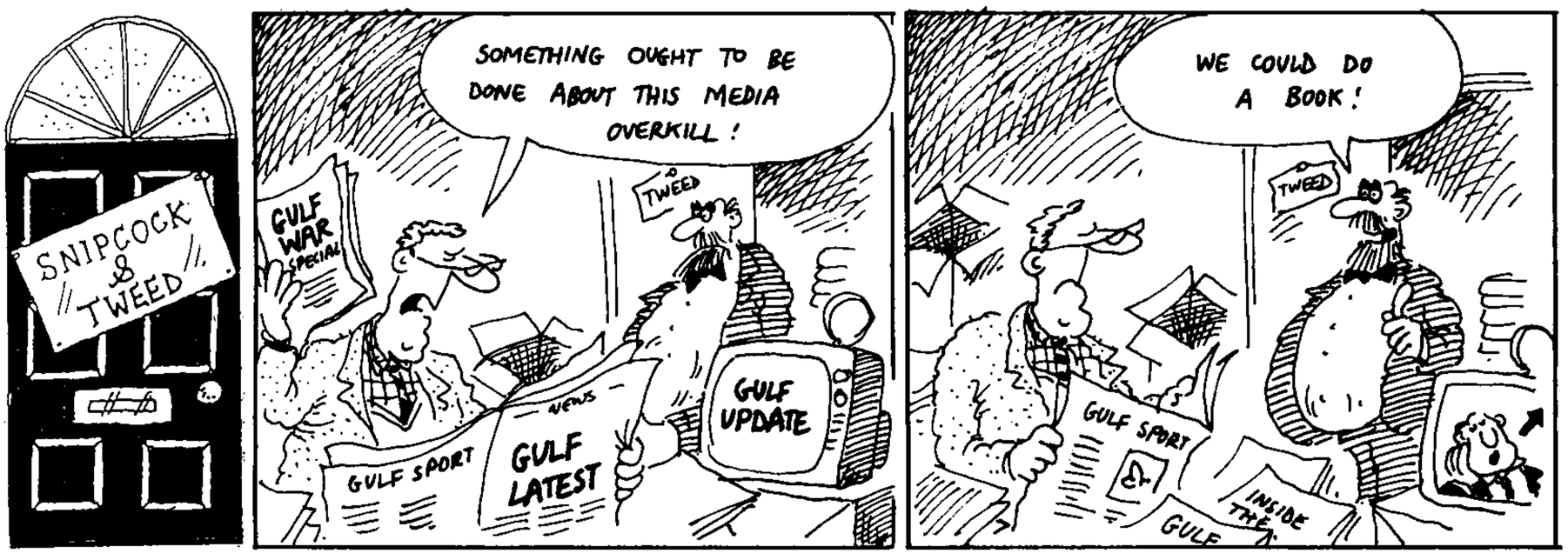
■ **THE LATE Virginia Andrews, who may or may not have been a British national, lived in the United States. Two of her titles, *Heaven* and *Dark Angel*, were published here by Collins in 1985 and 1987. The just released Public Lending Right figures reveal them to have been among the 100 most borrowed titles from public libraries in the year to June 1990.**

In addition, Virginia Andrews' *The Gates of Paradise* (Fontana) was the 10th selling highest paperback in the UK late year. It may be wondered why her new novel, *Dawn*, which has just been published here, bears the imprint not of Collins but of Simon & Schuster, who hitherto have published Virginia Andrews only in the US.

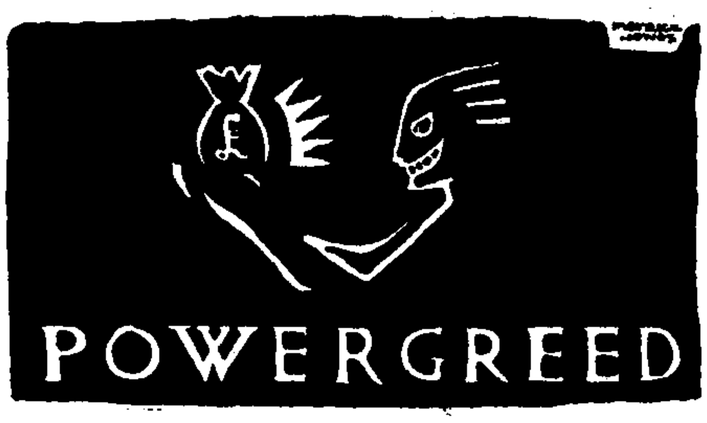
Could this be connected with the fact that Virginia Andrews died five years ago and that "her" novels since then have been written neither by her before she passed away or by her spirit, but by one Andrew Neiderman?

The laws about these things in the UK are infinitely more stringent than in the States.

'Bookworm'



Electricity



LIC and a promise

NATIONAL Power and PowerGen have been dealt hefty body blows just as 60 percent of the two new companies is due to be sold off to the public in the Government's farcical privatisation of electricity.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, grandly-named director-general of the Office of Electricity Supply, has refused to increase the number of big industrial customers to whom the two can sell their electricity at effectively subsidised prices.

At present the two can sell direct to 7.5 percent (12.5 percent in some areas) of large industrial customers, or LICs, as they are affectionately known. When in a spirit of open competition they suggested that they deserved an even bigger share, Littlejohn told them to get stuffed.

As *Eye* readers well know, National Power and PowerGen are none other than the old Central Electricity Generating Board sporting two new logos. All the old CEGB hands are in place, and for convenience the two firms can be regarded as one conglomerate, referred to henceforth as NatPowerGen. While the "break-up" of the CEGB was supposed to be the key to the competition which privatisation would introduce, everyone knows NatPowerGen will dominate the market.

Professor Littlechild has received complaints from the Association of Independent Electricity Producers, bitter at what it sees as a "backdoor subsidy" to NatPowerGen. NatPowerGen is paid 27 percent more for its electricity by the RECs (regional electricity companies) than the price paid to the independents. They last week complained to the Office of Fair Trading and stand a good chance of winning, wrecking still further what's left of the Government's privatisation plan.

The extra 27 percent is supposed to compensate NatPowerGen for having to buy expensive British coal instead of cheap slag produced by slave labour in Columbia. It is also a reward for having power stations available when there is a surge in demand. This is known as a "capacity credit" and, oddly, is not available to other generators.

The essence of the trouble is that the Government is trying to de-control electricity and control it at the same time. The effect is that the going rate paid for generated electricity is low for everyone except the large generators — they receive the 27 percent while their competitors get a much lower price.

The independents fear that they will never manage to gain even a toehold in the market. Stephen Andrews, director of the independents' association, has said: "The Government promised us removal of monopoly powers. After almost two years of closed negotiations, National Power, Power Gen and the distribution companies entered into an unholy alliance. The distribution companies were given monopoly supply rights. In return, National Power and PowerGen were allowed to dump all their excess costs on the domestic customers."

NatPowerGen will, in fact, be forced to put up the price for electricity to the ordinary customer to compensate for the cutprice offers it is making to the LICs. A typical advertisement by National Power in *The Engineer*, for example, says: "If you're spending more than £250,000 a year on electricity, allow us to turn on the light. Instead of having to buy from your regional electricity company, you have the opportunity to go direct to the biggest manufacturer. We can discuss flexible contracts to suit your specific needs." All well and good — but it is the ordinary electricity user who will pay the full rate.

When NatPowerGen coolly suggested to Professor Littlechild that he ought to give it yet more help by increasing the number of LICs to whom it can offer its electricity direct, he told it to get lost. A monetarist-idealist with visions of lots of little electricity companies offering their goods for sale, he has been increasingly worried about the way privatisation has been drifting. He is not the only one.

John Wakeham was appointed energy secretary to sort out the mess left behind by Cecil Parkinson. But as one expert commented: "If the Government had known it was going to be such a cock-up, it could have left Parkinson in charge".

Opera

Missing the high notes

WITH A DEATH or glory plot worthy of Wagner himself, a dramatic tale of power and intrigue is unfolding in the corridors of artistic power.

In the heroic corner Brian MacMaster, managing director of Welsh National Opera, has taken on the mantle of Siegfried while Lord Palumbo, in residence at the Hall of the Gibichungs, otherwise known as the Arts Council, has adopted the role of Gunther, the troll with an urge for domination. Forget the Ring of the Nibelungs — these titans are clashing over hundreds of thousands of pounds; money which is all that stands between WNO and a funeral pyre due to start burning on 31 July.

The tragic drama began, as they are wont to do, with joy and rejoicing. David Mellor — during his oh-so-brief interlude as arts minister — announced an enhancement fund which would reward artistic excellence and provide a purse for helping those companies which had hit the bottom of their overdraft facilities. Safe in its impressive operatic and management track record, Welsh National Opera applied for £325,000 from the fund to meet the shortfall between what it could earn — an impressive £2,300,000 from the box office last year — and its subsidy from the Welsh Arts Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Having received assurances that they would receive the necessary sum from the Arts Council's recently engorged bag of gold, WNO sat down and wrote a business plan, that being the way artistic heroes are expected to behave in the 1990s. Sadly Lord Palumbo, taking time off from his crusade to demolish listed buildings, had his own plans for the loot and transferred the money intended for our hero to that bottomless pit at the end of Floral Street, the Royal Opera House. Understandably Mellor was reported to be somewhat peeved at seeing his plans scuppered; indeed not only have the Welsh suffered but the LPO, newly resident at the South Bank, was distressed to find its money heading across London to the LSO in the Barbican.

As with all great sagas this is simply an old story re-told. It was in 1989 that plain old Peter Palumbo got in his helicopter and flew to Canterbury where he was joined by the then arts minister Richard Luce, making do with his junior ministerial Austin Montego, for a performance by Kent Opera. After the performance both were to be heard effusively congratulating all and sundry on its excellence. A mere six months later the Arts Council pulled the subsidy plug, thus ensuring that the performance they had praised was one of the last.

The warning to our Siegfried is clear: even if the money is pulled out of the Arts Council's petty cash drawer and crisis is staved off, the Kent Opera lesson should be kept close to heart. The Arts Council made one attempt to shut Kent down in 1987 and its failure on that occasion just meant a rather more professional hatchet job in 1989. The fight for the operatic ring is far from over; but if the era of love is ever to dawn then something just has to be done about that troll and the treasure he is pouring down the Covent Garden gullet.

Energy

Wave good buy?

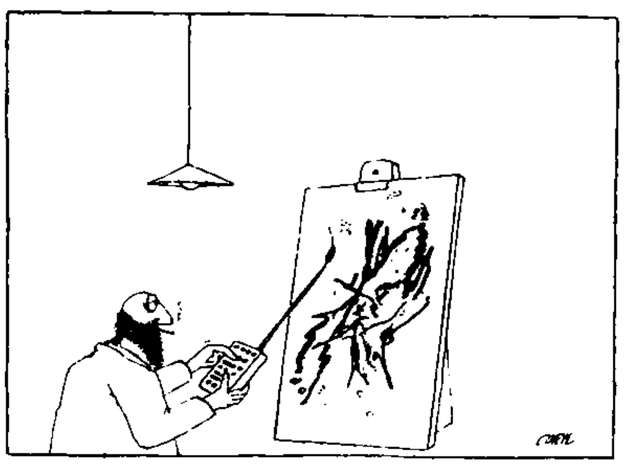
THE European Commission has capitulated following the report in the *Eye* on 4 January that its vice-president was being summoned before the Parliament to explain why he tried to mislead MEPs.

Filipo Pandolfi apologised to British MEP Llewellyn Smith for wrongly telling him that the EEC study on wave power had "confirmed that it would have been premature" to go ahead with research. In fact, the report said just the opposite: that the communtiy should embark on a four-year programme costing nearly £10 million.

As proof of its contrition, the commission also announced that it was allocating an immediate £1 million to wave energy research; that it is to stage a seminar attended by the leading experts in the field in April; and, most ominously, that it is to make public all its correspondence with Britain's Department of Energy and its Energy Technology Support Unit, based at Harwell, where, as a satellite of the Atomic Energy Authority, it carried out and tried to smother the wave energy programme.

The commissioner who gave the news, Abel Matutes, admitted that even now he had not read the report which was at the centre of the uproar. He justified this by saying: "I believe in God, I've never seen him, it's just that I've got faith." Let's hope they do some more basic research before they put to sea.

Art



Prints and paupers

"A BIGGER clash: David Hockney and the Crisis in Art" was the headline on the front cover of *Time Out* last week. It turned out to refer to two separate articles — one on David Hockney (pages of gush about how brilliant and successful he is) and one on the collapse of the rest of the art market.

But even Hockney is not immune from this cultural recession; indeed one could argue that he and his business handlers, by relentlessly flogging his prints at inflated prices, have helped to provoke it. A memo dated 17 January 1991 from Peter Osborne of the Berkeley Square Gallery to the Hockney-merchant William Darby, who had hoped to interest him in a bundle of the master's works, paints a grim picture — with nary a swimming pool in sight.

"The Hockney market is very depressed," Osborne writes, "and the prices — even for rare early work — is [sic] nowhere near previous levels... would say that there is not much chance of finding buyers for these right now unless the price came down to about half these retails. We could, of course, try and sell them for you on a commission basis but only at very competitive prices. I am sorry to sound so gloomy but such is the state of the market."

Even at bargain-basement prices, however, Hockneys are still not exactly *cheap*. The "retails" which Osborne lists include £18,000 for "Flowers made of paper" and £17,500 for something called "Sun". He adds that three photocopies of Hockney prints, which are included in the batch, are "not worth more than £2-3,000 each".

In the City

AS THE BANK reporting season nears, growing interest is focused on the damage assessment report expected from Standard Chartered. Standard Chartered has been exposed in recent months as having made so many loans too far that its continued presence as an independent bank has become increasingly questioned.

Standard Chartered embarked on a disastrous policy of what was (bad) jokingly termed entrepreneurial banking in an ill-timed and ill-chosen bid to carve a slice of the lending market here to make up for its traditional reliance on overseas earnings. Loosely translated, that came to mean that the bank was an easy mark for any wheeler-dealer with a story to sell and an appetite for borrowing. No matter that he might already be in deep, over his head even, with loans from other banks or had been politely shown the door by its rivals, Standard Chartered was the little bank that could. And it did. Over and over again. As a result it faces provisions against bad and dubious loans which could result in it having to cut its dividend — an event unheard of for a British clearing bank.

Just how grim the situation is said to be can be gauged from the rumour that chairman Rodney Galpin was forced to seek the intercession of his former colleagues at the Bank of England when the bank looked likely to take an up to £150 million hit which it might not be able to absorb without assistance. This intervention is said to have been what inspired the Bank of England to instruct the banks then holding out against a rescue for George "The Prisoner" Walker to come into line and carry on lending.

The Brent Walker crisis is still not resolved, only stayed; so Standard Chartered is not yet off that particularly painful hook. Ironically, one of those engaged in helping to keep "The Prisoner" afloat is former Standard Chartered banker George Kieffer, who now works for Brent Walker. Kieffer left the bank's asset risk management department (*sick*) — it oversees problem loans — about two years ago to join its probable major problem. Doubtless he is ever reassuring about George's ability to repay as and when or if he meets old colleagues.

Polly Peck's Asil Nadir was another winner Standard Chartered fell for. The bank's exposure there could be between £50 and £100 million when loans from UK and overseas group banks are added up.

Stephen Forsyth's Leisure Investments was one more client to whom Standard Chartered could seemingly never say no until it was too late. Leisure crashed early last year with Standard Chartered in for two figure millions.

These are just some of Standard Chartered's better known casualties in the lending war which made British and foreign banks believe that getting money out on the street — no matter who to, what for or how risky — was far better than playing safe. The mafia has a similar policy with its "shylocking", but its clients don't walk away from the loan and they always repay, one way or another. By the time all the bills are in, that lending war is likely to have cost the British banks several billions.

Much of this will be made up of innumerable less-publicised failures for Standard Chartered and the others. One little known and shortlived Standard Chartered client was clothing and jewellery group Paisley Hire, suppliers to Marks & Spencer and Ratners. Backed by fund managers Murray Johnstone, Paisley Hire reached the City by way of a private flotation in May 1987. Subsequent financings saw it attract a high quality shareholder following with such names as the Prudential, the Coal Board pension funds, Kleinwort Benson, Charterhouse and Standard Life.

After raising about £19 million, the last £3 million only the year before, Paisley Hire collapsed in January 1990. A 1988 profit of £2.8 million had become a six-month loss of £5.6 million. There was nothing for shareholders. Standard Chartered was left with a £9 million hole only partly filled by asset sales.

With the shares precariously perched just above 200p, a third of their last year peak, how Standard Chartered shareholders must wish they had been taken over by Lloyds in 1986 for approaching 800p.

CAUGHT BETWEEN the rock and a hard place, Asil Nadir must increasingly relish the more friendly and safer climes of Turkey or his native Northern Cyprus. Alas both are out of bounds so long as his bail restrictions remain unrelaxed in connection with the theft and false accounting charges he faces regarding Polly Peck's £25 million.

With the Serious Fraud Office looking to bring more charges and the big figure as to the amount of company cash involved possibly exceeding far more than even £100 million, the Bow Street magistrate Sir David Hopkin may need some persuading. It is perhaps indicative of his view of Nadir's preferences for where he might like to spend the next few years that he set bail at a record £3.5 million. Insurance broker Roger Levitt's bail by comparison is only £500,000. But then Roger Levitt does not have a home and powerful friends in Northern Cyprus — a "state" Britain does not recognise and therefore one with which there are no legal relations, a problem Polly Peck administrators have discovered when it came to having their high court-given powers recognised.

Meanwhile his personal creditors are increasingly puzzling over how Nadir — unable to repay their £50 million-plus — is able to afford the £2 million bail cash and the likely six figure sums being consumed by his two firms of lawyers. A favourite subject of speculation is that the bail, and possibly the legal fees, may be coming, directly or indirectly, courtesy of the Turkish government.

Asil undoubtedly has some major markers from Turkey's president Turgut Ozal — as he does with the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash. Both men have been supported by Nadir through his newspapers — if nothing else. Both helped to make Nadir the power he still is in their lands.

If markers there are, then now would be the time to be calling them in. And certainly Turkey and Northern Cyprus have so far been nothing if not supportive.

CLIVE SMITH, the Midlands "entrepreneur" with an eye for US oil and mining prospects that promise much but unfortunately deliver somewhat less, continues to be a factor in the quick and the dead world of such exploration companies with a London listing. Not up front of course after the unfortunate events at his first venture, Petranol.

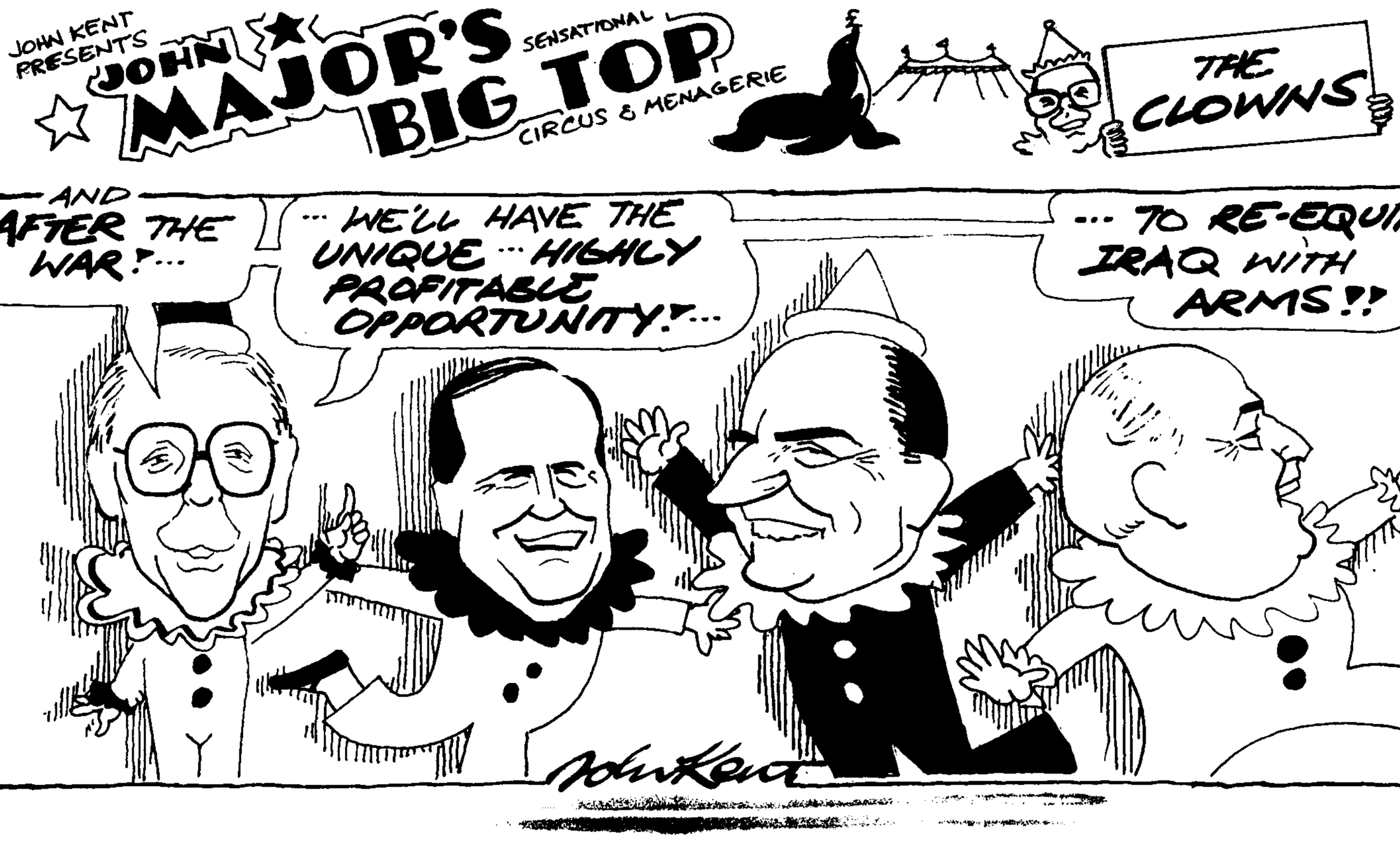
Floated in 1984 by the appropriately named Statham Duff Stoop (R.I.P.) with Smith as chairman, Petranol hit 330p on the hype about its oil prospects in Texas and the UK. By the time he quit in 1986 the shares were nearer 50p. His undisclosed support for a bid from Inoco — linked to corporate rapist David Rowland — was stopped by the Takeover Panel.

A year later Smith had moved on to Butte Mining, a product of the T.C. Coombs stable of non-winners. Butte shares were placed at 100p and soon hit 175p. Smith was in (and out?) early via his Jersey company Finchley Investments, which just happened, with a series of other offshore entities, to be a vendor of US mining properties to Butte. Its shares are now around 12p.

Just how many Butte shares Smith's interests have left is not clear. What is clear is that Smith had already moved on. In late 1987 Smith and his crew bought into Geevor, the former Cornish miner. Surprise, surprise: last month Geevor moved into a US coal mining venture. No doubt this was unrelated to Smith. Geevor shares, last year 86p, are now around 13p.

The Smith name has also surfaced — incorrectly and maliciously — in connection with another Trans-Atlantic disaster, Richmond Oil & Gas — presumably because of managing director David Wilkinson's former links to Butte. Floated in 1989 at 105p, although almost all the shares were left with the underwriters, Richmond was a definite result for its promoters who sold shares that cost 10p as the price climbed from 62p to 173p last year. The price is now back to 60p, not helped by the failure of certain supposed underwriters of last October's rights issue to take up their shares. The unidentified parties had absolutely no connection with Clive Smith or any one known to him.

'Slicker'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"It's a job."

Royal Engineer in Gulf

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TO TIM HEALY — who does it how we like it — welcome to Max with congratulations from the PE cappuccinies.

KIDDIEWINKIES like loadsamoney.

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LR-JP? I'd vote for you anyday.

THE COMIC Inquisition?

BERNARD & His Travelling Japanese Computer to Dutch Detective. Why? Answer by mail, meeting or telephone.

MALE (24), kind, considerate and good looking(ish), misses the girl he loves. Wants to eat at Ed's with the wonderful Bridget.

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THE REAL Yorkshire Ripper revealed. Clue 7. Sutcliffe was unaggressive, extremely helpful, generous and without a criminal record. A loveless bankrupt marriage turned him to detest all women. This hatred for Sonia was vented on innocent females by random assaults. Publisher NOEL O'GARA, Ballinahowen, Athlone, Ireland. Send £5.00.

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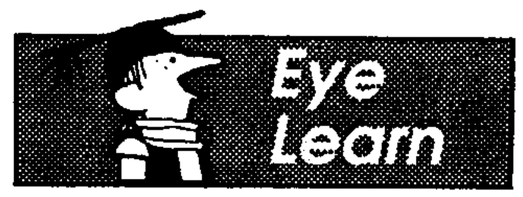

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DESPERATE, desperate woman seeks £25,000 as alternative to suicide. Box 4760.

POVERTY-STRICKEN registered disabled seeks £2,500 funding peace studies. DAVID BALLARD, 9 Tufnell Park Road, London N7 0PG.

ALL I WANT from life is a Corvette. Please help — I'm female and blonde and I'd look soooooo good behind the wheel. Box 4860.

PASSIONATE, impulsive undergraduate quit her degree to save the world. Must now pay back £3200 grant. Help! Box 4960.

UNEMPLOYED MALE, ex-nurse, needs £5,000 to finance return to nursing course. Genuine plea — anything legal considered — please help. Box 1859.

USED, ABUSED and in debt. Any amount gratefully accepted. Need £20,000. Box 1560.

PLEASE HELP! Male loser in life (28) desperately needs £10,000 for fresh start. Box 1760.

STUDENT needs cash. Any job considered. Box 1860.

POET and landscape painter need low-rent cottage with good views within 100 miles of London. Mod. cons not necessary. Please help. Tel 081-650 0941.

WONDERFUL project threatened. Please help to save a home that has helped so many — struck by sudden misfortune (info available) — must raise £15,000. Immediate reply. Box 3260.

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GENUINELY POOR agricultural student, desperate for money to pay debts and continue degree course. Acknowledged. Please help. Box 1660.

YOUNG WOMAN drowning in debt. Save life, please help. Box 1960.

PREGNANT WIFE and child to protect, debts mounting, bankruptcy looming, will consider anything, or repay if able. Details if required. Money or suggestions to Box 2060.

TWO RADICAL student composers desperately require patronage of £3,000 each to continue studies. Please help! Box 2160.

DEBTS! Female student needs donations/ lucrative work. Anything considered! Box 2260.

WHY SHOULD the blacks die? We can help with your cash. Box 2360.

FUNDS desperately needed by young filmmaker for promising project. If project takes off funds reimbursed. Donations received with thanks. Box 2460.

POOH BEAR needs £1,500 for Great Exposition please!! Box 2560.

PAYING THE MORTGAGE, even a bit off the arrears, but building society still foreclosing. £6,000 urgently needed, otherwise sense of humour only will remain. Not sure about our children's though. Box 2660.

RECOGNISED COMPOSER needs £5K loan secured against publishing royalties. Box 2860.

CHEF REQUIRES £5,000 for food bar project. First hero wins classic Saab and free meals for a week. Box 2960.

£1695 urgently required for computer course. Details available. Money repayable. Please help. Sponsorship considered from company offering employment (London). Genuine. Box 3060.

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DESPERATE NURSE urgently needs £4,000 to pay debts before baby born in spring. Please please help. Box 3460.

ILL HEALTH, 9 years unwaged, opportunity to start horticulture enterprise, need £2,000 urgently. Sincere thanks for any help, however small. Box 3560.

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MONEY NEEDED. Debts high. Please help. Thank you. Box 4060.

HELP. Box 4260.

DESPERATELY MISERABLE publishing failure urgently needs £13,500 to pay debts. Please, please help. Box 4360.

£2,000+ desperately sought for ceramic and photographic equipment. Box 4460.

LADY needs £1,000 immediately. Any job considered. Box 4560.

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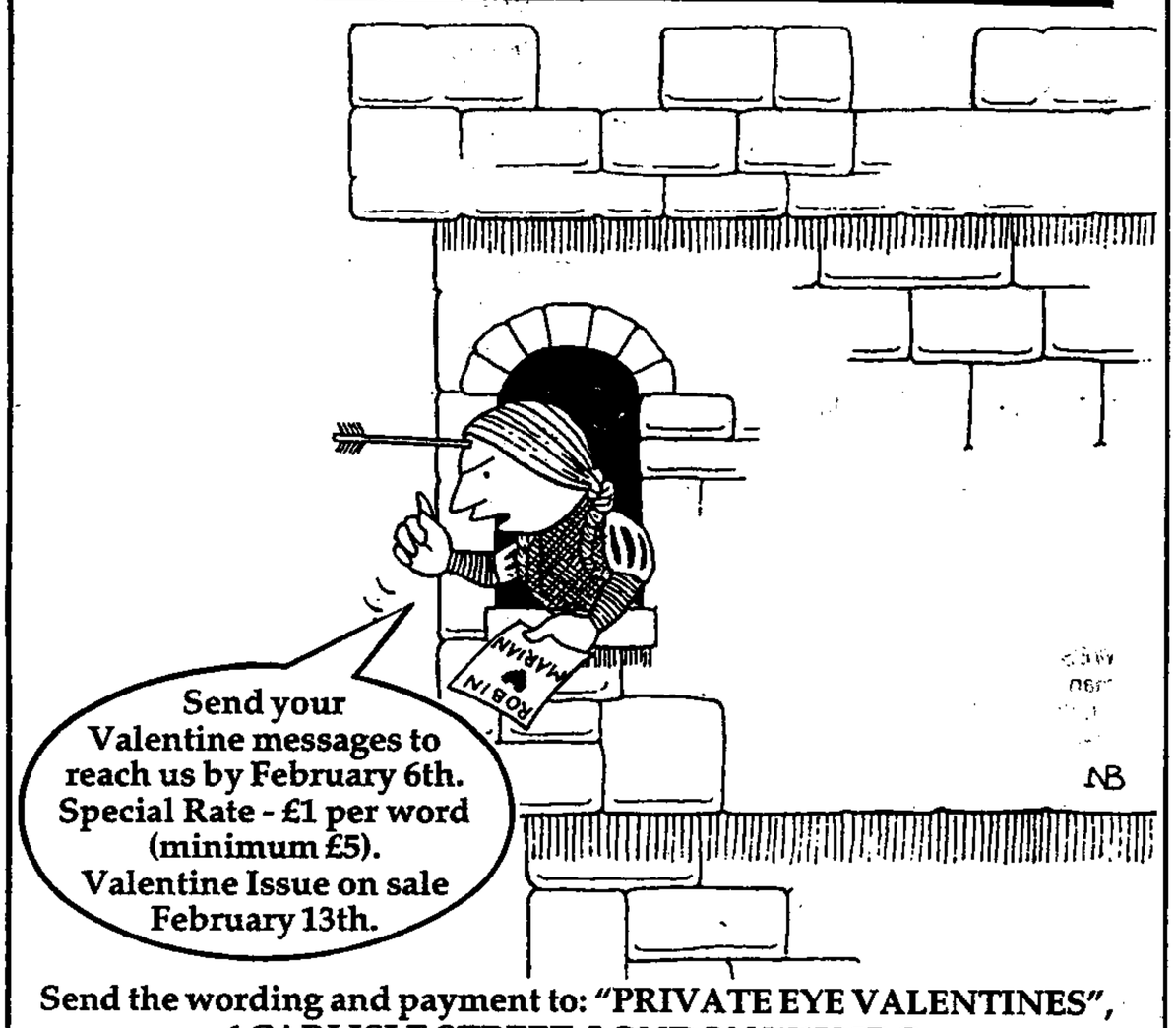

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"RETIRED" PENNILESS villain, 35, with old fashioned values and good brain, hedonistic, seeks similar lady possibly not retired, 35+, who enjoys going out, eating out, etc. Box 8460.

TALL, BLONDE, attractive fun. New to Cambs, seeks tall, prof male, 30s. Box 8560.

LIVELY CAMBRIDGE bachelor, 40s, seeks a younger female for deep friendship and settling in Europe. Shall we go Dutch? Box 8660.

6'5" SLIM, athletic extrovert hotelier (40), outrageous sense of humour, loves Aegean, good food, all sports, romantic evenings (nights), would love to meet warm-hearted lady for clandestine dalliance. Currently in terminal relationship — mutual discretion assured. Derbys/Notts. S. Yorks. Box 5560.

CAMBRIDGE WRITER (36) requires unusual female counterpart. Box 5260.

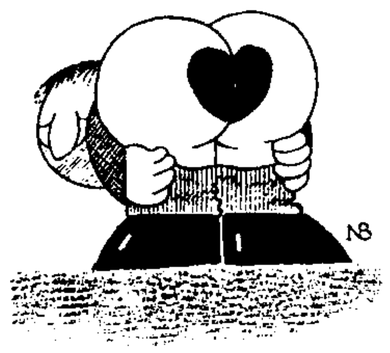
AMERICAN WOMAN, 38, driven by the demands of her expanding international arts-related business, would like a full-blooded, sympathetic man with a sense of humour to come to her rescue. Photo appreciated. Box 5660.

TALL ACCOUNTANT, 37, seeks intelligent, attractive woman, 20+ for conference, audit and maybe trial balance. Merseyside. Photo please/returned. Box 5760.

ATTRACTIVE MALE seeks slim, non smoking lady (18-28) with classic features, substantial bust and great sense of humour. Please send photo! London/South. Box 5860.

GOOD LOOKING, very successful business man aged 37, seeking lady under 35, must be very attractive with a good figure and modern outlook and appreciates a man taking the lead in a relationship. You should perhaps have plenty of spare time and enjoy travel, good food and wine and being spoilt and pampered. Recent photo and phone number ensures reply. Box 3159.

DON'T FORGET!



VALENTINE MESSAGES

IRISH MIST, 24 Nov. Barleycorn and Finsbury Park tube, 25 Nov. Dark-haired young lady sought (? pursued) by bearded creep. Sorry about all that, I'm really pretty civilised, just awfully shy. Box 3359.

TOO BUSY entrepreneur, 6ft, slim, single, 40, is determined to winter at his Caribbean villa but needs a perfect young lady to inspire him to delegate and go! Of course nobody's perfect but the wide eyes, bright mind and shiny hair of a near twenty lady could enchant the emotions to make the decisions. Phone and photo? Box 5959.

ONE IN A million. Distinguished Scandinavian gentleman, chairman of international company (London based and with home also in South of France) seeks strikingly attractive lady 35-47 with zest for life, who enjoys travelling, very stylish, elegant, refined, cultured, and with an ambition for luxury and refinement — as travelling companion and hostess in connection with international negotiations and cultural excursions...A certain artistic flair and intellectual interests would be appreciated together with a good knowledge of foreign languages. A sense of humour, warm sensuality, intelligence and imagination would in no way represent an obstacle to this mutually rewarding relationship in every respect. Write in strictest confidence, enclosing photo, to Box 3059.

FLORIDA-BASED BRIT, glamorous, slim, feminine, witty graduate writer/businesswoman, 40, seeks sophisticated man for stupendous loving relationship. PATRICIA, 117 Gardens Drive #103, Pompano Beach, Florida 33069.

BORED WITLESS professional forties male, weekly commuter to London, seeks feminine contact 25-40 with sense of humour and discretion. Own hair, teeth, executive flat etc. All replies acknowledged. Photo appreciated. Box 5160.

DISILLUSIONED Glasgow, Elle L.B., early 30s, divorced, seeks new contract. Box 8060.

SHEFFIELD. Professional woman, 39ish, seeks unattached local hero for long walks, pub quizzes etc. Box 8160.

OPTIMISTIC, green eyed, 26 year old female. Intelligent, sense of humour, loves outdoors, culture, pubs, Ireland, smoking etc. Seeks information on whereabouts of like-minded man. Box 6160.

MALE, 26, caring, humorous, intelligent, attractive, seeks similar female for relationship. Box 6260.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE man, late 40s, just divorced, seeks good-looking, mature girl for fun relationship. London area. Photo appreciated. Box 6360.

INNERCITY (SW1) ad-gnome, "40+" in age and waist measurement, but otherwise presentable, has temporary transport problem; seeks sensible lady car-owner to drive/accompany to country restaurants. Box 6460.

FEMALE, 30s, attractive and good fun, seeks witty, relaxed, N/S male with big nose. South West. Box 6560

EAST SUSSEX/KENT Finally unattached, thirtysomething, drinking, smoking career woman, endeavouring to become an ex-workaholic, looking for semi-serious fun and frolics with a similarly insane human being, who is into fun-fairs, cream teas, pub lunches, cuddles and silly discussions about life, the universe and the nature of reality but who isn't into whingeing or contemplating their navel overmuch. I'm slim, reasonably attractive (in the right lighting conditions), still stupid enough to believe in White Knights (but wouldn't want any dragons killed 'cos I like them too), not overly impressed by money or position (though young and beautiful is nice) and still firmly of the opinion that men can be decent, honest and truthful. (PS for some obscure reason I like men in uniforms, though not to the exclusion of those without them). So if there's anybody out there, write and tell me about yourself (send a photo if you feel brave enough). I look forward to hearing from you. PPS I'm not a Thatcherite. Box 6660.

OLD ENGLISH Sheepdog and owner living in delightful Sussex country pub seek lady for company, walkies, etc. Photo please. Box 6760.

FREE-SPIRIT assertive, responsible, male academic in prime seeks liaison with attractive, well-off(?) lady who enjoys such attentions. Box 6060.

MALE GRADUATE, 49, married, just moved to West London, seeks slim, attractive female, married for discreet safe relationship. Box 5960.

MATURE MAN, wanted (unless you'd like to be a toy boy!) 50-60s, educated, kindly, professional — experienced with women — for lady who is fun, young and loves life. Must live in Herts or near. Box 6860.

HOTELIER, 41, slim, athletic, 6'5", sporting/outdoor pursuits with outrageous sense of humour — seeks stylish extrovert, romantic lady for dalliance, discretion assured. Derbys/Notts/S. Yorks. Box 6960.

SEPARATED FELLOW, 51, who does some pheasant shooting, loves dogs and likes children, wants a lover. She must be stunning good looker. Box 7060.

PUBLISHING EXECUTIVE, 29, 6'2", not married, non smoker, enjoys rock music, booze and travel but shy and lacking drive. Looking for meaningful relationship in London area, but can travel. Quickly, I'm desperate. Box 7160.

LOVE LIFE NEEDED? Intelligent, sensitive, graduate man, humorous, youngish fifty, slim, tied (alas), seeks enlivening, discreet relationship. South Cheshire based. Can travel. Box 7960.

LINCOLN LADY, 33, public school, bright, humorous, affectionate, pleasant-looking, with two tiny children ditto; seeks endangered species of decent, interesting, reasonably affluent, unattached man for conservation, friendship and, who knows, maybe more? Chatty letter and photo guarantee reply. Box 8260.

SHY, LONELY seafarer, 29, wishes to meet ladies of same age for love/marriage. Interests include sport, food and drink, music etc. Photo appreciated. N.E. England. Box 8360.

LITERATE LOVER/HELP meet required. No bores need apply. Old broad. Birmingham area. Box 7260.

SOPHISTICATED, trilingual, Viennese lady, 37, seeks genuine, interesting, educated, unattached male. Box 7360.

TALL, INTELLIGENT, secure, professional, non-smoking male, 35-45 required to set off sparkling diamond, permanently. Box 7460.

ARE NORTHUMBERLAND/ Newcastle dead? Free, intelligent, articulate, professional female would like to hear from similar male, 47-55, with view to proving that N/N are alive and well. Box 7560.

LOVELY, LIVELY lady, looking for a caring bloke to take in both the sophisticated and casual side of living. Chiswick. Photo please. Box 7660.

HANDSOME DEVIL (36), seeks succulent, slender, seccubus (18-30ish) for hellraising, photo? Box 8860.

WEST YORKSHIRE. Likeable, left wing man, warm, attractive, slim, looking for similar woman, 25-30ish. Photo appreciated. Box 7860.

Eye Love in the Gulf

FEMALES, gifted with beauty and wit, yet plunged into despondency by lack of compatible males, are keen to indulge in epistolary romance with fearless army officers. 6ft min. Box 5360.

DESPERATE SQUADDIE, 26. Sat in Gulf. On his return would like to meet females, Oriental or European, for wild times and meaningless steamy affairs. Box 5460

DESERT RATS. Two forgotten Highland officers serving in the Gulf require amusing and titillating correspondence from gorgeous gals, photographs appreciated. Dinner in London to follow on victorious return. Captain S.J.C. Tootal & Captain A.A.H. MacDonald, 1st Bri Queen's Own Highlanders, Operation Granby, BFPO 649.

SOBER, healthy cavalry officer; not chuffed. Wine, women, song; not have. Please fill the gap in my life. Looks not important. Photograph essential. Box 10359.

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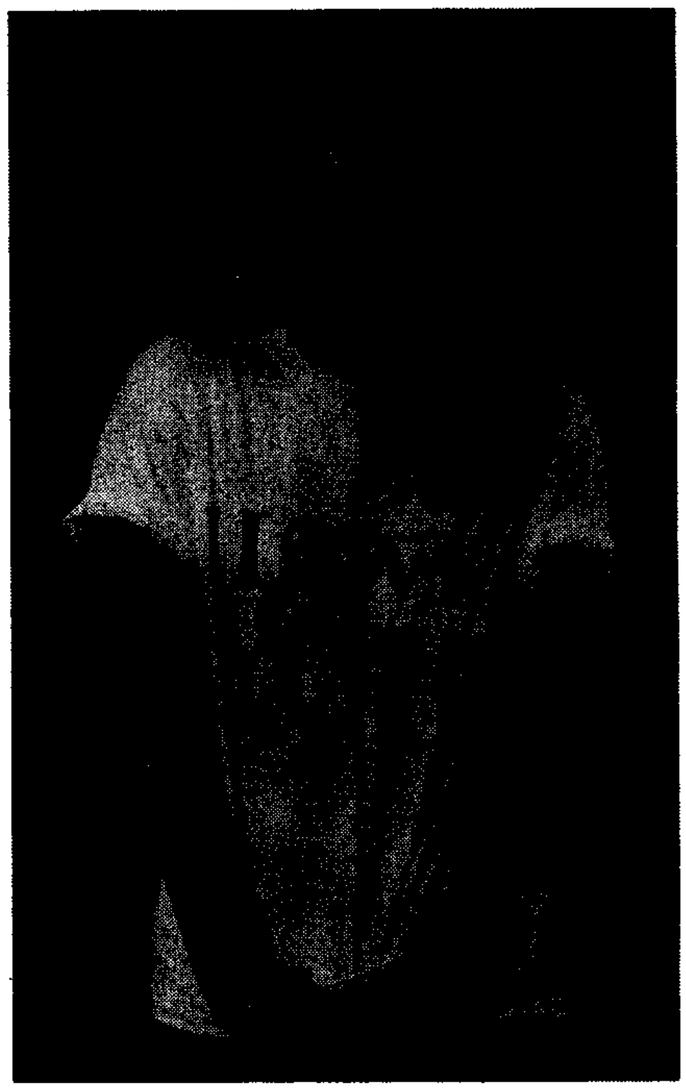

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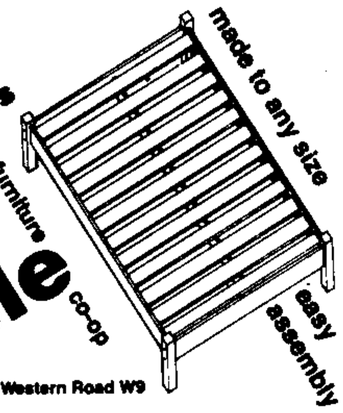

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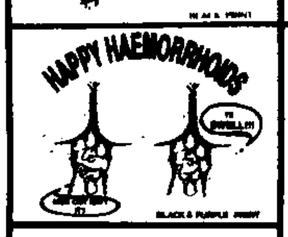

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